

IOWA BIRD LIFE

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Phenology of Shorebird Migration in Iowa

Matthew C. Kenne

INTRODUCTION

Over thirty species of shorebirds rely on Iowa's wetlands for resting and refueling on their yearly migratory journeys (Kent and Dinsmore 1996). The dynamic nature of water levels in wetland habitats means that shorebird use of a particular area can vary dramatically from season to season and year to year. Unfortunately, although populations of several species of shorebirds are believed to be declining (Howe et al. 1989; Morrison et al. 1994), Iowa's few remaining wetlands aren't surveyed for shorebird use by their controlling agencies or managed specifically for the needs of migratory shorebirds. Although experimental draw-downs of pools at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) have been successful in the past in attracting and supporting migrant shorebirds (M. Kenne, pers. obs.), prime shorebird habitat in Iowa is still only a by-product of management for waterfowl production and hunting and the vagaries of weather. Like shorebirds themselves, birders attempting to observe them are challenged to find locations with the best water levels and food resources. Their resulting observations carry an added weight of importance because the field reports submitted to *Iowa Bird Life*, along with a few counts conducted by volunteers of the International Shorebird Survey, are currently the only information being recorded on migrant shorebirds in Iowa. This situation will change as managers of many wetland areas in Iowa shift toward more "migratory bird" policies and away from the focused "waterfowl" stance of past practices (Doug Harr, Iowa Department of Natural Resources [DNR], pers. com.).

An important first step in finding shorebirds for fun, or planning for their conservation as a group or on an individual species basis, is accurate knowledge of the migration timing of each species. Recently published information on shorebird migration timing in Iowa generally falls into two categories, both of which have shortcomings as tools for finding shorebirds or management planning: seasonal abundance labels (such as those found on National Wildlife Refuge checklists), which are imprecise even when partly based on specific observations; and record early and late migration dates, which are better for indicating the limits of a particular shorebird species' absence from the state than for suggesting its presence. Record early or late birds are the rarest individuals of each species in a season and are not representative of the main migration.

The purposes of this review are to better define the migration period in which each transient shorebird species can be expected to be present in Iowa, to give an indication of each species' expected seasonal migration peaks by examining recent observations, and to discuss select migration timing features of individual species. Hopefully this information will help birders in their search for these exciting creatures, both for their enjoyment and for the assistance their observations can give in shaping future shorebird conservation efforts in Iowa. Iowa birders with further interest in shorebirds are encouraged to gather data as citizen-scientists for the International Shorebird Survey at the website <www.shorebirdworld.org> where their efforts can have direct bearing on shorebird conservation efforts across the Western Hemisphere.

METHODS

Fifteen years of Field Reports in *Iowa Bird Life* (IBL 59(2)–74(2) [1989–2003]) were searched for each season’s earliest and latest reported date for transient shorebird species of Regular or Casual occurrence, and for the highest seasonal count of each Regular species. Iowa censuses submitted to the International Shorebird Survey from 1989–1992 were also reviewed. Species that nest and/or winter in Iowa (Piping Plover, Killdeer, Upland and Spotted Sandpiper, and Wilson’s Snipe) were excluded; but Wilson’s Phalarope, a rare nester in northern Iowa, was included with the transient group because its occurrence data more closely resemble that of a transient than a breeding bird. Median dates for the beginning and end of each migration season were determined for each species using as many of the 15 possible years of data as were available. Thus, four median dates were established for each species: spring arrival and departure (Figure 1), and fall arrival and departure (Figure 2). The median date is the middle date in the series, e.g., half of the spring arrivals occur before the median date, and half after. This provides a more reasonable measure of when each species should be present in Iowa by eliminating the rare early or late individuals.

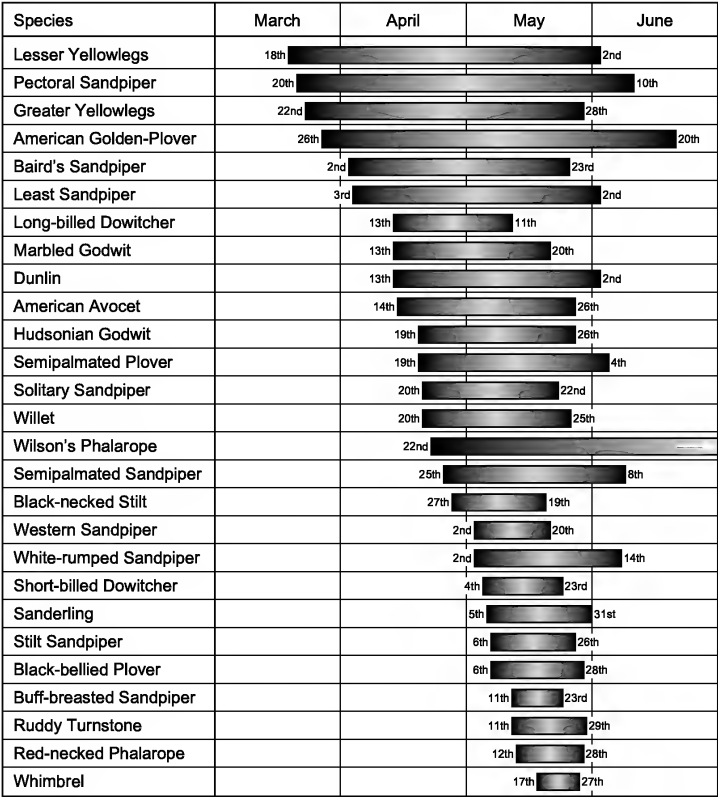


Figure 1. Median spring arrival and departure dates of transient shorebirds in Iowa beginning in March and continuing through June.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

One aspect of migration phenology that was not readily apparent in the Iowa record was that of differential timing between adults and juveniles in fall. A pattern of two fall migration peaks is noticeable in many shorebird species because the adults migrate south several weeks before their juveniles are ready. There are very few observational data that indicate the age of shorebirds reported in Iowa except for some dowitcher identifications and in the documentations of late birds. Any statements in this paper about “adult” vs. “juvenile” migration in Iowa are assumptions based on my own experiences in conjunction with other states’ findings (e.g., Paulson 1993), and not necessarily based on actual aging by plumage in the original observations. It is hoped these assumptions, along with the rest of the data (Table 1), will be refined by future observations and research.

According to these median dates (Figures 1 and 2), the spring shorebird procession in Iowa begins with four species and normally occurs before the end of March. Six species make their initial appearance during the first half of April and seven additional species arrive during the second half, with the final 10 arrivals waiting until May. Although eight migrant species regularly linger into June, White-rumped Sandpiper is the only one that

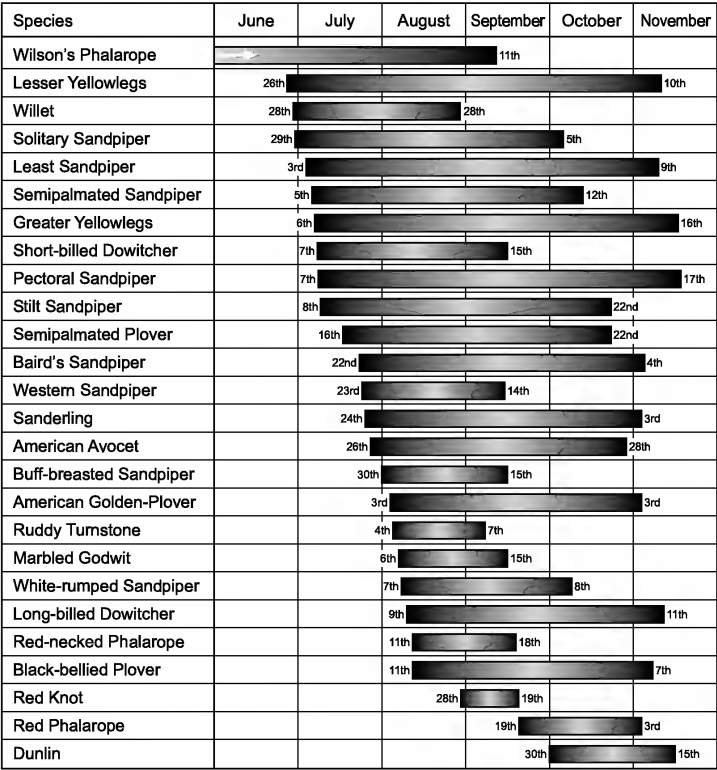


Figure 2. Median fall arrival and departure dates of transient shorebirds in Iowa beginning in June and continuing through November.

arrives in May, and it has the earliest arrival of the May species. Most of the shorebirds nesting at the highest latitudes, e.g., White-rumped Sandpiper, Sanderling, Black-bellied Plover, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, and Ruddy Turnstone, usually pass through Iowa latest in May while nesting areas may still be snow-covered, and then return in August or beyond. They seem to be so conditioned for a late, quick passage north that they do not linger into June like many of the earlier species (seven of 17 March and April arrivals). This pattern matches that which was recently shown for summer shorebird migration in Minnesota (Bardon 2002). Not surprisingly, some of the earliest March and April arrivals, e.g., Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Least and Pectoral Sandpipers, are returning from the breeding grounds by late June or early July, having nested earlier and/or closer to Iowa.

The peak number of spring species occurs from 6 May, with the arrivals of Stilt Sandpiper and Black-bellied Plover, until the departure of Solitary Sandpiper 22 May, during which time 23–25 shorebird species can be present. This window includes most of the peak spring migration in Iowa, although from a volume standpoint, substantial numbers of Baird's and Pectoral Sandpipers, Wilson's Phalaropes, American Avocets, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Long-billed Dowitchers can also be found beginning in mid-April.

Fall migration, with its staggering of adults and juveniles, is a more protracted affair than spring: three migrant species usually arrive in late June, 12 new shorebirds begin showing up in July, and early August has seven new arrivals. Red Knot arrives late in August, at the same time as Willet makes the first departure. Eight departures occur in September (including Red Knot) before the occasional Red Phalarope shows up, which is then followed by the influx of Dunlin at the end of the month. Interestingly, of the 11 of 26 fall migrants that linger into November, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Least and Pectoral Sandpipers were noted above as among the earliest fall returnees.

The peak number of fall species occurs from 9 August, when Long-billed Dowitcher arrives, until 15 September, when Short-billed Dowitcher, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, and Marbled Godwit depart, with 20–24 species visiting Iowa during that time. While it is difficult to generalize about the long and varied fall season, twin peaks of shorebird numbers seem to straddle this migration window: a late July–early August gathering of returning adults, followed by a late September–early October buildup of juveniles.

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Table 1. Shorebird species accounts listing median spring and fall arrival and departure dates and dates of the highest spring and fall counts, 1989–2003^a

| Species | | | Median spring arrival–departure | | | Median fall arrival–departure | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------------|------|--------|
| BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER | | | 6 May (14 ^b)–28 May (13) | | | 11 Aug (15)–7 Nov (14) | | |
| <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> | | | | | | | | |
| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
| 32 | 19 May 1994 | Polk | 110 | 11 Oct 1989 | Dickinson | | | |
| 32 | 19 May 1996 | Marion | 42 | 23 Oct 1998 | Marion | | | |
| 28 | 25 May 1993 | Story | 40 | 3 Aug 1994 | Appanoose | | | |
| 28 | 19 May 1995 | Sac | 20 | 12 Sep 1999 | Marion | | | |

Black-bellied Plover's spring peak is concentrated in the last two weeks of May, only two weeks after the median first arrival. The October peak is comprised of juvenile birds.

Table 1. continued

AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER 26 Mar (15)–20 Jun (14) 3 Aug (14)–3 Nov (14)
Pluvialis dominica

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-------|-------------|-----------|-----|-------------|--------|
| 1,170 | 4 May 1990 | Wright | 700 | 7 Oct 1990 | Wright |
| 1,140 | 2 May 2000 | Dickinson | 490 | 12 Oct 1989 | Polk |
| 786 | 14 May 1993 | Story | 147 | 3 Oct 1997 | Hardin |
| 700 | 19 May 1998 | Dickinson | 126 | 20 Sep 1998 | Polk |

American Golden-Plover has the widest spring migration window of any of our shorebirds. The first birds usually arrive in basic plumage or with some noticeable early pre-alternate molt. By the early to mid-May peak, molt into breeding plumage is complete in most individuals and the remaining variation is due to sexual dimorphism in breeding plumage (Johnson and Connors 1996). Individuals regularly linger into June (11 of 14 years); and while they are usually described as being in “basic” plumage, they are most likely one-year-old birds in a dull 1st alternate plumage (Oscar Johnson, pers. comm.). Golden-Plovers returning after mid-July (only 6 of 14 years), along with the regular early August birds, are adults molting out of breeding plumage. Unlike spring, most adults migrate away from Iowa in the fall, flying out over the Atlantic Ocean to South America, but numbers of juveniles later pass through the center of the continent.

SEMPIALMATED PLOVER 19 Apr (15)–4 Jun (12) 16 Jul (14)–22 Oct (14)
Charadrius semipalmatus

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|-----------|-----|------------|---------|
| 150 | 14 May 1992 | Marion | 101 | 5 Aug 2002 | Marion |
| 127 | 7 May 2002 | Winnebago | 97 | 9 Aug 1997 | Marion |
| 100 | 5 May 2003 | Johnson | 64 | 6 Aug 1989 | Kossuth |
| 80 | 21 May 1994 | Worth | 37 | 2 Sep 2003 | Marion |

Unlike *Pluvialis* plovers, returning fall adult Semipalmated Plovers are more numerous than juveniles.

BLACK-NECKED STILT 27 Apr (7)–19 May (5) —
Himantopus himantopus

Black-necked Stilt has changed from Accidental status at the beginning of the review period, to Casual occurrence, and recently to Regular recognition. This is the result of an actual expansion of nesting range, so migration peaks and fall median dates might be discernable if observations continue to increase. There were a record number of stilts found in Iowa in the spring of 2004, with a late bird in June.

AMERICAN AVOCET 14 Apr (14)–26 May (13) 26 Jul (14)–28 Oct (14)
Recurvirostra americana

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|---------------|-----|-------------|--------|
| 99 | 26 Apr 1998 | Fremont | 82 | 20 Oct 1994 | Polk |
| 40 | 18 Apr 1989 | Pottawattamie | 38 | 13 Oct 1995 | Polk |
| 30 | 24 Apr 1992 | Pottawattamie | 37 | 30 Sep 2003 | Polk |
| 28 | 22 Apr 2000 | Appanoose | 22 | 20 Oct 1998 | Polk |

The American Avocet spring peak is a rush beginning one week after the median first arrival. With nesting to our west, it's not surprising that spring birds show a preference for western Iowa, but it is curious that late fall flocks seek out the large waters of Saylorville Reservoir.

Table 1. continued

| GREATER YELLOWLEGS | | | 22 Mar (13)–28 May (11) | | 6 Jul (15)–16 Nov (15) | |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------|------------------------|--|
| <i>Tringa melanoleuca</i> | | | | | | |
| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County | |
| 100 | 18 Apr 1996 | Kossuth | 176 | 29 Oct 1989 | Marion | |
| 56 | 4 May 1991 | Kossuth | 50 | 4 Nov 1990 | Johnson | |
| 51 | 6 May 2002 | Marion | 50 | 7 Aug 1993 | Fremont | |
| 30 | 30 May 2002 | Dickinson | 40 | 4 Aug 1991 | Kossuth | |

The fall counts indicate both the peak of returning adult Greater Yellowlegs and later juveniles.

| LESSER YELLOWLEGS | | | 18 Mar (15)–2 Jun (9) | | 26 Jun (15)–10 Nov (13) | |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--|
| <i>Tringa flavipes</i> | | | | | | |
| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County | |
| 2,000 | 6 May 2003 | Johnson | 2,000 | 28 Jul–6 Aug 1989 | Kossuth | |
| 850 | 7 May 2002 | Winnebago | 1,200 | 4 Aug 1991 | Kossuth | |
| 800 | 29 Apr 1989 | Fremont | 400 | 1 Aug 1994 | Kossuth | |
| 600 | 18 Apr 1996 | Kossuth | 300 | 17 Jul 2001 | Kossuth | |

Returning fall adult Lesser Yellowlegs seem to be far more numerous than later juveniles.

| SOLITARY SANDPIPER | | | 20 Apr (10)–22 May (7) | | 29 Jun (14)–5 Oct (13) | |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|--|
| <i>Tringa solitaria</i> | | | | | | |
| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County | |
| 66 | 29 Apr 1989 | Fremont | 202 | 20 Jul 1991 | Johnson | |
| 19 | 6 May 2002 | Marion | 100 | 8–30 Jul 1989 | Marion | |
| | | | 29 | 24 Jul 1994 | Louisa | |

Returning fall adult Solitary Sandpipers are sometimes found in loose groups, while later juvenile birds are rather solitary.

| WILLET | | | 20 Apr (14)–25 May (12) | | 28 Jun (14)–28 Aug (13) | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|---------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--|
| <i>Catoptrophorus semipalmatus</i> | | | | | | |
| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County | |
| 41 | 29 Apr 2001 | Clay | 28 | 2 Jul 2001 | Polk | |
| 37 | 29 Apr 1990 | Guthrie | 20 | 22 Jun 1998 | Appanoose | |
| 35 | 1 May 1991 | Story | 9 | 29 Jun 1991 | Kossuth | |
| 35 | 3 May 1996 | Fremont | 7 | three counts | | |

Finished (or failed) nesting Willets quickly reach Iowa on their way to eastern and Gulf Coast wintering sites.

| WHIMBREL | | | 17 May (7)–27 May (5) | | — | |
|--------------------------|--|--|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> | | | | | | |

Spring Whimbrels have a late and extremely narrow migration window, but they are rarely encountered. There were too few fall observations to form a pattern.

Table 1. continued

HUDSONIAN GODWIT

19 Apr (14)–26 May (13)

—

Limosa haemastica

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|--------|
| 450 | 15 May 1997 | Fremont | 28 | 27 Sep 1999 | Polk |
| 198 | 22 Apr 2000 | Fremont | 26 | 9 Aug 1997 | Polk |
| 159 | 13 May 1992 | Fremont | | | |
| 100 | 10 May 2003 | Pottawattamie | only rare singles | | |

Hudsonian Godwit is one of several shorebird species whose main spring migration path passes to the west of Iowa. Fall flocks are a very rare occurrence outside of Canada; virtually the entire population flies nonstop to South America (Elphick and Klima 2002).

MARBLED GODWIT

13 Apr (14)–20 May (14)

6 Aug (9)–15 Sep (9)

Limosa fedoa

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|------------|-----|------------|---------|
| 30 | 30 May 2000 | Hardin | 3 | 6 Aug 1993 | Fremont |
| 20 | 15 May 1994 | Guthrie | 3 | 7 Sep 2002 | Lee |
| 20 | 27 May 1994 | Polk | 1–2 | several | |
| 20 | 22 May 2001 | Winneshiek | | | |

Marbled Godwit's spring migration window seems to be fixed about a week earlier than Hudsonian Godwit's, but its peak is about a week later according to recent observations, a situation that deserves further study.

RUDDY TURNSTONE

11 May (13)–29 May (14)

4 Aug (14)–7 Sep (12)

Arenaria interpres

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|---------|-----|-------------------|---------------|
| 30 | 27 May 1994 | Polk | 6 | 31 Jul–1 Aug 2001 | Polk |
| 21 | 23 May 2002 | Fremont | 4 | 8 Sep 1996 | Pottawattamie |
| 20 | 28 May 1989 | Adair | 4 | 27 Jul 2000 | Johnson |
| 19 | 20 May 1996 | Fremont | 3 | three counts | |

Spring Ruddy Turnstones peak during the last third of May. The 18 days between the median spring dates is one of the shortest migration periods.

RED KNOT

—

28 Aug (8)–19 Sep (5)

Calidris canutus

There were too few spring Red Knot observations to form a pattern. Fall sightings of both molting adults and later juveniles are increasing in frequency.

Table 1. continued

SANDERLING 5 May (13)–31 May (12) 24 Jul (14)–3 Nov (14)
Calidris alba

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|---------------|-----|-------------|--------|
| 39 | 26 May 1996 | Pottawattamie | 56 | 16 Sep 1995 | Polk |
| 20 | 20 May 1995 | Sac | 36 | 24 Oct 1996 | Polk |
| 17 | 30 May 2003 | Hardin | 29 | 19 Sep 1996 | Polk |
| 10 | 14 May 2002 | Jackson | 26 | 20 Sep 2000 | Polk |

Juvenile Sanderlings are seemingly drawn to the beaches of Saylorville Reservoir in late fall.

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER 25 Apr (10)–8 Jun (15) 5 Jul (14)–12 Oct (6)
Calidris pusilla

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-------|-------------|---------|-----|-------------|-------------|
| 4,000 | 23 May 1992 | Fremont | 500 | 10 Aug 1991 | Johnson |
| 500 | 13 May 2002 | Fremont | 500 | 10 Aug 1991 | Marion |
| 350 | 11 May 1989 | Fremont | 276 | 12 Aug 1997 | Marion |
| 308 | 11 May 1991 | Fremont | 263 | 7 Aug 2001 | Polk |
| | | | 225 | 26 Aug 2000 | Cerro Gordo |

Semipalmated Sandpipers are a bit of a puzzle. They don't reach Iowa until somewhat later in the spring, often lingering into June, and yet are one of the first returning species in early July.

WESTERN SANDPIPER 2 May (7)–20 May (8) 23 Jul (13)–14 Sep (11)
Calidris mauri

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|------------|--------|-----|-------------|---------|
| 3 | 4 May 1989 | Polk | 22 | 3 Sep 1989 | Marion |
| 2 | six counts | | 11 | 4 Aug 1991 | Guthrie |
| | | | 4 | 28 Aug 2003 | Marion |

The majority of Western Sandpipers that winter on the southeastern and Gulf Coasts migrate to the south and west of Iowa. Outside of this regular migration path, their rare occurrence is often minimally documented, and confusion with other species abounds.

LEAST SANDPIPER 3 Apr (9)–2 Jun (10) 3 Jul (14)–9 Nov (12)
Calidris minutilla

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-------|-------------|-----------|-----|-------------|-------------|
| 1,000 | 11 May 1997 | Johnson | 650 | 11 Aug 2003 | Polk |
| 350 | 12 May 1996 | Kossuth | 450 | 26 Aug 2000 | Cerro Gordo |
| 300 | 18 May 2002 | Winnebago | 432 | 21 Aug 1996 | Polk |
| 150 | 9 May 1990 | Johnson | 250 | 10 Aug 1991 | Marion |

Least Sandpipers share similar habitats and migration windows with Pectoral Sandpipers while in Iowa, although their actual migration distance is much less.

Table 1. continued

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER 2 May (14)–14 Jun (13) 7 Aug (5)–8 Oct (5)
Calidris fuscicollis

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-------|-------------|---------|-----|-------------------|-------------|
| 2,000 | 19 May 1989 | Fremont | 5 | 4 Sep 1989 | Cerro Gordo |
| 1,000 | 20 May 1996 | Fremont | 5 | 16 Sep–2 Oct 2001 | Johnson |
| 580 | 13 May 2002 | Fremont | 2 | five counts | |
| 200 | 15 May 1997 | Fremont | | | |

White-rumped Sandpipers first appear in early May and their numbers are peaking (especially in SW Iowa) two weeks later. Fall birds are rarities, as most birds follow a looping path over the Atlantic Ocean to winter in South America.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER 2 Apr (15)–23 May (14) 22 Jul (15)–4 Nov (15)
Calidris bairdii

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|---------|-----|-------------|---------------|
| 400 | 27 Mar 1991 | Fremont | 73 | 8 Sep 2003 | Marion |
| 100 | 12 Apr 1992 | Fremont | 50 | 18 Aug 1991 | Marion |
| 100 | 21 Apr 1996 | Fremont | 33 | 8 Aug 1994 | Polk |
| 90 | 25 Apr 1993 | Fremont | 30 | 7 Aug 1996 | Pottawattamie |
| | | | 30 | 1 Sep 1999 | Kossuth |

Spring Baird's Sandpipers arrive early in North America and migrate north with short hops between feeding stops through the center of the continent. This is in sharp contrast with the other main long-distance migration strategy of arriving almost simultaneously at all latitudes along the migration path after a later, longer flight like Hudsonian Godwits or White-rumped Sandpipers (Skagen et al. 1999). Adults migrating south in fall are much less common than both spring birds and juveniles. The adults' main fall staging area is to our west, and they rapidly leave before juveniles start arriving during the last third of August (Jehl 1979).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER 20 Mar (12)–10 Jun (11) 7 Jul (15)–17 Nov (14)
Calidris melanotos

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-------|-------------|-----------|-------|--------------|---------|
| 3,000 | 19 Apr 1999 | Johnson | 5,000 | 6–7 Aug 1989 | Kossuth |
| 2,000 | 29 Apr 2003 | Johnson | 3,000 | 29 Aug 1991 | Johnson |
| 1,500 | 13 May 1992 | Fremont | 2,760 | 28 Aug 2003 | Marion |
| 1,500 | 18 May 2002 | Winnebago | 1,700 | 11 Aug 2001 | Polk |

Widespread and common, the ubiquitous Pectoral is usually Iowa's most numerous sandpiper. Sexual dimorphism in size (most notable in spring) makes it sometimes possible to observe differential migration timing between the sexes: mostly males in April and July, females arrive in May and return in August, and bright juveniles follow in September. Individuals migrating from Siberian nesting sites to Patagonia and back by way of Iowa travel almost 19,000 miles a year.

Table 1. continued

DUNLIN 13 Apr (13)–2 Jun (15) 30 Sep (12)–15 Nov (15)
Calidris alpina

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|----------|-----|-------------|---------|
| 200 | 15 May 1997 | Fremont | 140 | 14 Oct 1990 | Johnson |
| 184 | 13 May 2002 | Fremont | 75 | 16 Oct 1993 | Johnson |
| 150 | 26 May 2003 | Woodbury | 61 | 11 Nov 1998 | Marion |
| 120 | 25 May 1999 | Fremont | 59 | 27 Oct 1991 | Marion |

Unlike other shorebirds, almost all Nearctic Dunlin molt into basic plumage while on the breeding grounds before beginning their southbound migration. I excluded dates of 7, 16, and 30 July in determining the median fall arrival because these migrating adults are so far from the norm for this species (the next earliest arrival was 28 Aug). If they are included, the median fall arrival is still the latest of all the shorebirds at 28 September.

STILT SANDPIPER 6 May (11)–26 May (12) 8 Jul (14)–22 Oct (15)
Calidris himantopus

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|---------|-----|---------------|---------|
| 161 | 13 May 2002 | Fremont | 500 | 7–13 Sep 1991 | Marion |
| 110 | 5 May 1996 | Kossuth | 420 | 15 Sep 1989 | Kossuth |
| 53 | 17 May 1991 | Fremont | 400 | 11 Sep 1999 | Kossuth |
| 28 | 11 May 1989 | Fremont | 327 | 20 Sep 2003 | Kossuth |

Juvenile Stilt Sandpipers are the most numerous age class, peaking in September.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER 11 May (6)–23 May (6) 30 Jul (14)–15 Sep (15)
Tryngites subruficollis

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|---------|-----|------------|---------|
| 22 | 19 May 1990 | Fremont | 146 | 2 Sep 2000 | Polk |
| 8 | 20 May 1994 | Monona | 135 | 1 Sep 1999 | Marion |
| 3 | 22 May 1998 | Fremont | 42 | 1 Aug 1999 | Johnson |
| | | | 41 | 5 Sep 1996 | Marion |

Buff-breasted Sandpiper holds the distinction of having the narrowest spring migration window of all regularly occurring shorebirds, but additional observations would likely change the spring median dates. They're much more confined to their main migration path to our west in spring than when juveniles wander more widely in fall.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER 4 May (15)–23 May (14) 7 Jul (13)–15 Sep (11)
Limnodromus griseus

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|----------------|---------|-----|-------------|---------|
| 300 | 11 May 1991 | Fremont | 45 | 21 Jul 1999 | Johnson |
| 90 | early May 1994 | Louisa | 44 | 12 Jul 1991 | Kossuth |
| 81 | 13 May 2003 | Fremont | 25 | 29 Aug 1990 | Johnson |
| 80 | 18 May 1998 | Johnson | 25 | 13 Aug 1998 | Johnson |

Over the past 15 years, the overlap of reported arrival and departure dates between Short and Long-billed Dowitchers in the spring was 27 Apr to 17 May. In the fall, the overlap was 21 Jul to 22 Sep. The overlaps, when using these median dates, are 4 May to 11 May in spring and 9 Aug to 15 Sep in fall. Particular care is needed with dowitcher identification during these periods when adults of both species can be present together. See Long-billed Dowitcher.

Table 1. continued

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER 13 Apr (14)–11 May (13) 9 Aug (9)–11 Nov (15)
Limnodromus scolopaceus

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|---------|-----|-------------|---------|
| 156 | 28 Apr 2003 | Warren | 123 | 23 Oct 1998 | Marion |
| 137 | 3 May 1991 | Fremont | 120 | 13 Oct 2001 | Kossuth |
| 50 | 27 Apr 1990 | Fremont | 116 | 8 Oct 2003 | Polk |
| 50 | 30 Apr 1998 | Fremont | 88 | 13 Oct 1991 | Lucas |

Early returning adult Long-billed Dowitchers in fall are very difficult to find amid the more common Short-billed Dowitchers because subtle plumage distinctions are worn or rapidly molted away. The timing of these fall Long-billed Dowitcher observations corresponds well with the results of a recent review of North American specimens (Caleb Putnam, pers. com.). I chose to use only the nine earliest dates through 8 Sep (presumably adults) in determining the median fall arrival date. If the six later dates (most of which refer to juvenile birds) are included, the median fall arrival date becomes 26 Aug.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE 22 Apr (13) 11 Sep (11)
Phalaropus tricolor

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|---------------|-----|-------------|---------|
| 500 | 10 May 2003 | Pottawattamie | 20 | 2 Sep 2002 | Polk |
| 223 | 13 May 2002 | Fremont | 16 | 22 Aug 1989 | Kossuth |
| 200 | 29 Apr 1989 | Fremont | 14 | 16 Aug 1991 | Kossuth |
| 170 | 30 Apr 1991 | Woodbury | 11 | 6 Sep 1990 | Story |

There are very few Wilson's Phalaropes seen in the fall when compared to spring. Most birds shift to saline lakes in the West to condition for the southbound flight to South America.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE 12 May (11)–28 May (13) 11 Aug (13)–18 Sep (12)
Phalaropus lobatus

| No. | Date | County | No. | Date | County |
|-----|-------------|-----------|-----|-------------|-----------|
| 54 | 21 May 1990 | Dickinson | 13 | 27 Aug 2003 | Dickinson |
| 21 | 20 May 1996 | Monona | 9 | 22 Aug 1989 | Kossuth |
| 10 | 13 May 2002 | Appanoose | 9 | 23 Sep 2000 | Dickinson |
| 6 | 14 May 1995 | Story | 8 | 24 Aug 2002 | Hancock |

Red-necked Phalarope is another late-May migrant with a narrow window. In the fall, juveniles are more numerous inland than adults.

RED PHALAROPE — 19 Sep (7)–3 Nov (3)
Phalaropus fulicaria

There were too few spring Red Phalarope observations to form a pattern. Only Dunlin regularly arrives later in the fall than Red Phalarope.

^a Data from *Iowa Bird Life* 59(2)–74(2) [1989–2003] and International Shorebird Survey [1989–1992].

^b Number of years for which there were available data.

Field Reports — Spring 2005

Matthew C. Kenne



Matthew C. Keene

WEATHER

The month of March was characterized by the usual wide swings in temperatures, but its most notable feature was one-half of normal precipitation. Both Guthrie Center and Onawa recorded no measurable precipitation between 24 February and 24 March. Finally, a major snowstorm crossed very northern Iowa on the 18th and left Northwood with 16 inches. Even with this storm, the seasonal snow total was 13 inches less than normal across the state, the 13th lowest in 118 years of records. April and May seemingly switched temperatures: the first three weeks of April averaged 10 degrees above normal, followed by below-normal temperatures continuing into early May. A hard freeze occurred on the 3rd and 4th across the state, the lowest May temperatures since 1967. Mid-May saw flooding rains in northcentral Iowa, and the rest of May remained generally cool and rainy except for continued dryness in the eastern part of the state.

HABITAT, GENERAL TRENDS

The warm weather in April encouraged several early passerine arrivals, and it encouraged birders to be out and able to find them. The same effect in reverse was also notable: compared to 2004, there seemed to be a delay by early-May passerines until after the freeze. There was also a subtle difference in how flooding rains changed shorebird habitat this spring as compared to 2004: while rises at Coralville Reservoir again ended shorebird staging at that location, sheet-water pools in northcentral Iowa farm fields held more birds this year because the rains came midway through planting instead of after completion. The earlier flooding, however, surely decreased the number of successful waterfowl nests.

Widespread reports of Black-necked Stilts proved that the 2004 invasion was not an aberration, and again we are left with the question: When and where will they nest? Likewise, Eurasian Collared-Doves and Great-tailed Grackles continue to consolidate their positions in Iowa.

The northern owl invasion of winter 2004–2005 carried into spring with the continued presence of the Manly Northern Hawk Owl and the discovery of a late Great Gray Owl in Winneshiek Co. Two other irruptive “winter” species, Pine Siskin and Red-breasted Nuthatch, wandered throughout the spring. Both were widely seen into May, with Red-breasted Nuthatch nesting in Carroll County for only the second time in Iowa. One can’t help wondering if there may have been unnoticed Pine Siskin nesting attempts somewhere in the state.

UNUSUAL SPECIES

Accidental and Casual species reported this spring were Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Brown Pelican, King Rail, Whimbrel, Ruff, California Gull, White-winged Dove, Northern Hawk Owl, Great Gray Owl, Vermilion Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, Western Tanager, Lark Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Lazuli Bunting.

SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Casual or Accidental species. * = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **A** = area, **L** = lake, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NA** = nature area, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **SF** = state forest, **Sl** = slough, **SP** = state park, **USNWR** = Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, **WPA** = waterfowl production area, **WA** = wildlife area.

Whenever a specific number of individuals is not indicated in the following species accounts, a single bird was reported.

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK: A flock of 3 or 4 birds was seen and photographed 18–20 April from *Dickinson* to *Hardin* to *Johnson* (m.ob.). The Records Committee will consider the possibilities of wild vs. captive occurrence.

Greater White-fronted Goose: There were many more reports of Greater White-fronted than Snow Geese. Most: 1,000 on 23 Mar in *Wright* (SSP). Last: 2 on 11 May at Dunbar *Sl Greene* (JJD, SJD).

Snow Goose: Few were reported, and it is unclear whether the lack of March reports from along the Missouri R indicates an actual lack of birds. Most: 1,100 on 6 Mar in *Emmet* (PH) and 750 on 23 Mar in *Wright* (SSP). Last: 30 migrating over *Story* 31 May (SSP).

Ross's Goose: Reported in March with Canada, Cackling, or White-fronted Geese as often as with Snow Geese. There were eight reports of 1–7 birds, plus 30

on 20 Mar at Amana *L Iowa* (CRE) and 13 on 21 Mar at Little Wall *L Hamilton* (SSP).

Cackling Goose: The following reports provided details of identification: 20 on 1 Mar at Clear *L Cerro Gordo* (PH), 4 on 15 Mar at Swan *L Johnson* (CRE), 75 on 29 Mar in *Cerro Gordo* (PH), and 2 on 8 May at Banner *WA Warren* (JS).

Mute Swan: All: 22 Mar in *Floyd* (RGo), 8 Apr at Sweet *M Bremer* (DWM), and 15 Apr at a regular location: Dudgeon *L Benton* (DLF).

Trumpeter Swan: Eleven unmarked birds 24 Mar in *Worth* (RGo) testify to the success of the region's reintroduction efforts. Up to 15 marked/unmarked birds were seen throughout the spring at Union *Sl NWR Kossuth* (MCK).

Tundra Swan: The only report of the spring was of 2 on 22 Mar at *L&D 10 Clayton* (DAk); surely there were more.

Gadwall: Most: 370 on 12 Mar at Green Island *WA Jackson* (DAK). Last: 29–31 May at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ).

American Wigeon: Most: 280 on 22 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAK). Last: 2 on 20 May at Secret *L Fremont* (RIA, PHA)

American Black Duck: There were four March reports of 1 or 2 birds, plus the largest group of 7 on 18 Mar at Cone *M Louisa* (CRE).

Mallard: Most: 1,250 on 23 Mar at Lower Morse *L Wright* (SSP).

Cinnamon Teal: All: 2 on 6 Apr at Goose *L Clinton* (PVN) and a Cinnamon/Blue-winged Teal hybrid was at Peterson *P Story* 4 May (WO).

Northern Shoveler: Most: 267 on 10 Apr at Saylorville *Res Polk* (BE).

Northern Pintail: 4,200 on 12 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* (DAk) was the largest group of puddle ducks reported. The next highest count was 350 on 23 Mar at Lower Morse L *Wright* (SSP).

Canvasback: Without any counts from the staging area on the Mississippi R in SE Iowa, the highest totals were 1,900 on 22 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk), 1,000 on 26 Mar at Crystal L *Hancock* (JB), and 1,000 at the Frenchtown area 29 Mar (DAk).

Ring-necked Duck: Most: 480 on 20 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk) and 605 on 2 Apr in *Worth* (PH). A lingerer was at Riverton WA *Fremont* 30 May (LJP, BKP).

Greater Scaup: Reported from 14 counties with 10 birds still present on the Mississippi R in *Lee* on 5 May (PEL) and a single still at Grover's L *Dickinson* on 15 May (LAS). Most: 70 were reported 20 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk).

Lesser Scaup: Most: 2,400 on 22 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk) and 4,100 on 10 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE). Three pairs were still present 28–29 May at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS).

Surf Scoter: The only report was 7 May at Keokuk *Lee* (PEL).

White-winged Scoter: Three were on a pond in *Ida* 12 Mar (DoP).

Black Scoter: Only one: 16 May at Chichauqua WA *Polk* (DK-details) [second latest].

Long-tailed Duck: The only report was of a late bird 30 Apr in *Madison* (DTh-details).

Bufflehead: Most: 70 on 26 Mar at Pool 9 *Allamakee* (DAk). Last: 13 on 15 May at Grover's L *Dickinson* (LAS).

Common Goldeneye: Most: 550 on 20 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk). The last 2 were at Keokuk *Lee* 7 May (PEL).

Hooded Merganser: Most: 650 on 20 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk). Broods were noted in *Greene*, *Polk*, and *Dickinson* by the end of the period (WO, JS, LAS).

Common Merganser: Most: 1,100 on 19 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB). Last: 3 May at both Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and Saylorville Res (JJD).

Red-breasted Merganser: Most: 97 on 25 Mar at Red Rock Res *Marion* and 72 on 26 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (both AB). Last: 7 May at L Macbride *Johnson* (CRE).

Ruddy Duck: Most: 237 on 10 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE). Four were still at Colo Ponds *Story* 31 May (HZ).

Gray Partridge: Not reported south of *Carroll*, *Guthrie*, *Story*.

Ruffed Grouse: All: 5 Apr near Guttenberg *Clayton* (DAk) and 14 and 19 May at Stephens SF *Lucas* (AJ, RIA, PHA).

Greater Prairie Chicken: Up to 12 lekking birds were reported at Kellerton BCA *Ringgold* (AB, JG, RLC, RIA, PHA, CRE).

Northern Bobwhite: Only reported from *Warren*, *Decatur*, *Polk*, and *Woodbury* (JRL, JG, DTh, GLV).

Common Loon: First: 22 Mar at Maffitt Res *Polk* (JG). Most: only 4 on 7 May at L Macbride *Johnson* (CRE). Last: 10 May at Swan L *Carroll* (MTh).

Pied-billed Grebe: First: 19 Mar at Pleasant Cr RA *Linn* (DLF) and 20 Mar at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (SSP).

Horned Grebe: Reported from eight locations. First: 14 Mar at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (BE). Most and last: a total of 21 on 23 Apr in *Wright* and *Hancock* (SSP).

Red-necked Grebe: All: 21 Apr until 5 May at Otter Cr M *Tama* (CRE, DP, JG-photo, JLF, JJD, RLC, THK), 23 Apr at West Twin L *Hancock* (SSP-photo), a different bird 2 May at West Twin L (SSP-photo), and 2 on 9 May at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH, RGo).

Eared Grebe: First: 2 Apr at Silver L Worth (PH). Most: 10 on 15 May at Grover's L Dickinson (LAS). Last: 2 on 20 May at Willow Sl Mills (JJD).

Western Grebe: All: 5 on 30 Apr at Trumbull L Clay (LAS), 5 May at L Manawa Pottawattamie (LKP, BKP), 18 May at Union Slough NWR Kossuth (MCK), 2 on 28–29 May at Dan Green Sl Clay (LAS), and 2 on 28 May at West Swan L Emmet (LAS).

BROWN PELICAN: A report was referred to the Records Committee.

American White Pelican: First: 60 on 6 Mar at the Mississippi R Scott (SMF). Most: 700 on 2 Apr at Bussey L Clayton (DAK).

Double-crested Cormorant: First: 20 Mar in Marshall (MPR). Most: 100 on 30 Apr at Riverton WA Fremont (LJP, BKP) and 100 on 4 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CRE).

American Bittern: 1–3 birds were reported from 22 locations. First: 9 Apr at Otter Cr M Tama (DP).

Least Bittern: 1–3 birds were reported from nine locations, with the first on 6 May at Chichauqua WA Polk (DK). Most: 10 on 29 May at Banner WA Warren (JS).

Great Egret: First: 2 on 2 Apr at Bussey L Clayton (DAK). Most: 16 on 28 May at Ada Hayden P Story (WO) and 10 on 29 May at Heron Bend Lee (CJC).

Snowy Egret: All: 19–20 Apr at L Macbride Johnson (DP, JLF), 29 Apr at Errington M Polk (RTr), 7–8 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (RTh, BE), 7 May at New L Woodbury (BFH), 10 May at Riverton WA Fremont (LJP, BKP), and 14 May at Chichauqua WA Polk (DK).

Little Blue Heron: An adult was at Bauer Sl Hamilton 21–24 Apr (JJD, RIA, PHA-photo, JG-photo).

Cattle Egret: Singles 12 Apr at Moeckly Pr Polk (BE) and 15 Apr at Knudsen's Pond Cerro Gordo (RGo) were the first of reports from fifteen counties.

Most: 13–26 birds were seen 14–22 May in Warren, Dickinson, and Polk (PH, LAS, ETh, DK, BE).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: There were reports of 1–8 birds from twelve counties with the first 2 on 23 Apr at Jensen M Madison (RTr). Most: 12 on 27 Apr at Dean Appanoose (RLC).

White-faced Ibis: First: 20 Apr at Cardinal M Winneshiek (FL). Singles were at Akron Plymouth 28 Apr (BFH), South R WA Warren 30 Apr (RTr), and Dunbar Sl Greene 31 May (RTh). Three were at Hawkeye WA Johnson 8 May (CRE). A flock at Riverton WA Fremont swelled from 13 to 18 birds 30 Apr until 19 May (CNK, PEL, CRE).

Plegadis species: Early dull ibis were found 10 Apr at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CRE, JG) and 20 Apr at Breda Carroll (RTh),

Turkey Vulture: There were five reports during the first week of March across southern Iowa.

Osprey: First: 6 Apr at L Meyer Winneshiek (Larry Reis fide DC). Sixteen other singles were reported throughout the period.

Mississippi Kite: All: 9 May at Otter Cr M Tama (MTW*) [ties second earliest], and 2 on 19 May over the Des Moines R valley Boone (MTW*).

Bald Eagle: Kossuth had its first confirmed nesting along the East Fork of the Des Moines R north of Algona (MCK).

Northern Harrier: Late birds, possibly nesting, were noted 15 May at Kettleson Hogsback Dickinson (LAS), 24 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CJC), 27 May at Owego Wetlands Woodbury (LJP, BKP), and 30 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (SSP).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Last: 21 May at Squaw Cr P Linn (DLF).

Cooper's Hawk: Nesting activity was reported from *Kossuth*, *Hancock*, *Palo Alto*, *Warren* (3), *Story*, and *Johnson* (MCK, SSP, LAS, JB, JS, WO, CRE).

Northern Goshawk: The only report was 27 Mar at Martin Access *Cherokee* (LAS).

Red-shouldered Hawk: All: 6 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (CRE), 8 Mar in *Allamakee* (FL), 12 Mar at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (EB), 13 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DK), from 3 Apr to the end of the period at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr), 5 Apr in *Polk* (DK), 2 on 9 Apr in *Ringgold* (JS), 2 on 28 Apr at Coon Cr Access *Winneshiek* (DK), 1 May in *Decatur* (JRL), 22 May at Aldo Leopold WMA *Bremer* (AIB), and 2 on 24 May at Yellow R SF *Allamakee* (DK).

Broad-winged Hawk: First: 2 on 9 Apr at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (JPB). A pair was noted 13–29 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP), but all other reports were of single birds.

Swainson's Hawk: All: 2 Apr at Squaw Cr P *Linn* (DLF), 19 Apr in *Kossuth* (MCK), 2 on 20 Apr at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 26 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL), 3 on 3 May at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (MOr), 4 May at DeKalb WA *Decatur* (RIA, PHA), and 14 May at Stephens SF *Lucas* (DP, DAK).

Red-tailed Hawk: A Harlan's Hawk was noted in *Madison* 5 Mar (JG).

Rough-legged Hawk: Most: 5 on 2 Mar at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (GLV). Last: 26 Apr at Big M *Butler* (DK). Eight other birds were reported.

Golden Eagle: All: singles on 17 and 24 Mar at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (BE, MOr), and 26 Mar at Dean *Appanoose* (RLC-details).

Merlin: Seven were at the Glendale Cemetery roost in Des Moines 3 Mar. They were identified as 3 females and one male of the Taiga race, and 3 female

Prairie race (JG). Seven single migrants were noted 5 Mar to 27 Apr.

Peregrine Falcon: First: returning nesters were at Davenport *Scott* on 6 Mar (SMF) and Lansing *Allamakee* on 8 Mar (FL). A late push of single migrants was noted 13–15 May in *Polk*, *Story*, *Decatur*, *Woodbury*, and *Warren* (SJD, WO, JJD, GLV).

Prairie Falcon: One on 13 Mar in *Butler* was the only report (RGo-details).

KING RAIL: One found 10 May by Jay Gilliam at the Cumming wetlands *Warren* became famous during the IOU Spring Meeting and it remained through the end of the period (see p. 146).

Virginia Rail: First: an injured bird was found in *Cerro Gordo* by Lowell Washburn of the DNR on 30 Mar (fide PH) [record early] and one was calling at Big Wall L *Wright* on 8 Apr (SSP-details) [third earliest].

Sora: First: 14 Apr at Otter Cr M *Tama* (THK, JLF) and in *Decatur* (JRL). Most: 14 on 9 May at Wildin Pr *Kossuth* (MCK) and 23 on 14 May at Cumming wetlands *Warren* (JG).

Common Moorhen: All: 26 Apr at Hanlontown M *Worth* (RGo), 30 Apr to 17 May at Long Pond *Guthrie* (DTh, RIA-photo, PHA, JJD, SJD), 7 May in *Lee* (PEL), 21 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (MPr), 2 on 23 May at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DK), and 28 May at Cheever L *Emmet* (LAS).

American Coot: Most: 3,200 on 2 Apr at L&D 10 *Clayton* (DAK). A leucistic individual was described 24 Apr at Diehl Wetlands *Warren* as whitish with a golden-brown head (JB, JG).

Sandhill Crane: Cranes were reported from ten locations, but repeatedly only from Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DC), Cone M *Louisa* (BSc, CJC), and Otter Cr M *Tama*, where 13 were found 21 Mar (DP). Most: 75 migrants 19 Mar at Pool Sl *Allamakee* (FL).

Black-bellied Plover: First: 7 May at both Dunbar Sl *Greene* (JJD) and Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC). Most: 31 on 7 May in *Hancock* (PH). Last: 3 on 30 May at both Dunbar Sl (SSP) and in *Kossuth* (MCK).

American Golden-Plover: First: 115 on 3 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (LJP, PHA). Most: 228 on 10 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE) and 225 in eight flyby flocks 14 May at Wildin Pr *Kossuth* (MCK). Last: 30 May in *Kossuth* (MCK).

Semipalmated Plover: First: 23 Apr at Lower Morse L *Wright* (SSP). By far the most were 200 on 7 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE). Last: 4 on 30 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

Piping Plover: All: 2 on 23 Apr at New L *Woodbury* (BFH), 28 Apr at Sweet M *Bremer* (DWM), 28 Apr and 7 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE, JJD), 11–12 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD, JJD, DTh), 4–5 May at Spirit L *Dickinson* (ETTh-photo), and 5 on 19 May at MidAmerican Ponds *Pottawattamie* (CRE), with only a single bird remaining at MidAmerican Ponds 20 May (RIA, PHA).

Black-necked Stilt: All: 2 on 17 Apr at Runnells *Marion* (AB, RIA, PHA, JG-photos, SSP), 7–10 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC, DP, CRE, DAK), 7 stilts on 8 May in *Boone* (BE) that dwindled to one on 9 May (JJD), 1 or 2 birds 11–12 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD, JJD, DTh), and 2 on 25–26 May at McIntosh SP *Cerro Gordo* (PH, RGo, CJF).

American Avocet: All: 26 Apr at Eagle L Flats *Hancock* (CJF, RGo), 8 on 26 Apr at Colo Ponds *Story* (JJD, HZ, MPr), 3 May at Meier WA *Hardin* (MPr), and 2 on 19 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SSP).

Greater Yellowlegs: First: 28 Mar in *Story* (SSP). Most: 50 on 20 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE) and 45 on 4 May at Dean *Appanoose* (RLC). Last: 30 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SSP).

Lesser Yellowlegs. First: 2 on 26 Mar at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB). Most: 1,750 on 30 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (CNK), 2,500 on 6 May at Riverton WA (PEL), and 1,000 on 10 May at Hawkeye WA (CRE). 300 were found 4 May at Dean *Appanoose* (RLC) and 7 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (RTh). The last reports, both on 30 May, were of 2 in *Kossuth* (MCK) and 1 at Dunbar Sl (SSP).

Solitary Sandpiper: First: 3 on 13 Apr at Dean *Appanoose* (RLC). Most: 23 on 5 May in *Winneshieck* (DC). Last: 2 on 18 May in *Kossuth* (MCK).

Willet: Willets were reported from 18 counties. The first was 17 Apr at Jensen M *Madison* (RTr). Most: 20 on 28 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE), 30 on 30 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (CNK), and 20 on 1 May in *Decatur* (JRL). Last: 29 May at Moeckly Pr *Polk* (AB) and 2 on 30 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SSP).

Spotted Sandpiper: First: 12 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) [second earliest] and 16 Apr at Swan L *Johnson* (CRE).

Upland Sandpiper: The Allen's got this new yard bird 11 May in a flooded cornfield behind their home in *Dallas* (RIA, PHA).

WHIMBREL: All: 2 on 27 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (JWR*).

Hudsonian Godwit: First: 16 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 2 on 17 Apr at Runnells WA *Marion* (RTr). Most: 30 on 10 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (LKP, BKP), 29 on 14 May at Breda *Carroll* (RTh), and 46 on 18 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (JG), but all other reports were of less than 8 godwits. Last: 1–7 birds 28–30 May in *Story*, *OBrien*, *Polk*, and *Greene* (WO, DK, AB, SSP).

Marbled Godwit: All: 2 on 17 Apr at Runnells WA *Marion* (SSP, JG), 5 on 27 Apr around Coralville Res *Johnson* (JLF, DP, CRE), 4 on 30 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (CNK), singles 1–2 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (JJD, RIA, PHA) and

Jensen M *Madison* (RTr), and 2 on 18 May at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ).

Ruddy Turnstone: First and most: 8 on 15 May in *Lucas* (RLC). Singles were found 27–28 May in *Kossuth*, *Hardin*, and *Emmet* (MCK, MPr, LAS).

Sanderling: First: 3 May in *Marshall* (MPr) and then 4 on 9 May at Jester P *Polk* (BE). Last: 3 on 27 May at McIntosh SP *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 4 on 28 May in O'Brien (DK) and 30 May at Hubbard *Hardin* (MPr).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: First: 6 May at Alden *Hardin* (MPr) and 10 on 7 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DAk). Most: 140 on 29 May at Polk City WA *Polk* (AB) and 175 on 30 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SSP).

Western Sandpiper: One along the Mississippi R *Dubuque* 10 May was the only report (RIA, PHA-details).

Least Sandpiper: First: 2 on 10 Apr in *Hancock* (PH). Most: 1,000 on 10 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE). Last: 5 on 27 May in *Kossuth* (MCK) and 40 still at Dunbar Sl *Greene* 30 May (SSP).

White-rumped Sandpiper: First and most: 900 on 6 May at Riverton *Fremont* (PEL). Later peak counts were 116 on 9 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (AB), 250 on 19 May at New L *Woodbury* (BFH), and 100 on 27 May in *Kossuth* (MCK).

Baird's Sandpiper: First: 22 Mar at L&D 10 *Clayton* (DAk*). The next earliest arrivals were 4 on 10 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE). Most: 1,800 on 6 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (PEL), a record high count. Last: 30 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SSP).

Pectoral Sandpiper: First: 4 on 28 Mar at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Most: 1,000–3,000 were counted at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 10 Apr until 10 May (CRE, THK), and 2,000 were found 6 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (PEL). Last: 21 birds were at five locations in *Kossuth* 30–31 May (MCK).

Dunlin: First: 4 on 15 Apr at Coralville Res *Johnson* (CRE). Most: 95 on 7 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (RTh), 90 on 18 May at Dunbar Sl (JG), and 90 again at that location 30 May (SSP). Dunlins were still widespread 30 May with 36 at Riverton WA *Fremont* (LJP, BKP), 69 in *Kossuth* (MCK), and 8 at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

Stilt Sandpiper: First: 4 on 17 Apr at Runnells WA *Marion* (AB) [second earliest]. The next were 4 on 8 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DK). Except for 107 on 19 May at New L *Woodbury* (BFH), low numbers were reported. Last: 9 on 30 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SSP).

RUFF: A female was at Riverton WA *Fremont* 6 May (PEL-details).

Short-billed Dowitcher: First: 6 on 1 May at Banner WA *Warren* (AB) and then 5 on 7 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE). Most: 45–50 on 16–18 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (RTh, JG), otherwise 14 on 18 May in *Kossuth* (MCK) and 12 on 20 May at Chichauqua WA *Polk* (DK). Last: 2 on 30 May at Dunbar Sl (SSP).

Long-billed Dowitcher: First: 17 Apr at Runnells WA *Marion* (SSP, JG). Most: 550 on 30 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (CNK) growing to 2,000 on 6 May (PEL), record high counts. 120 birds were the peak elsewhere: 3 May at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ) and 4 May at Dean Appanoose (RLC). Last: 2 on 9 May in *Hancock* (PH) and 2 on 10 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). I received essentially no identification details for either dowitcher spp.

Wilson's Snipe: The peak was in early April: 22 on 2 Apr at Banner WA *Warren* (AJ), 28 on 8 Apr at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (PH), and 24 on 10 Apr at Dean Appanoose (RLC). One was still at Ada Hayden P *Story* on 29 May (WO).

American Woodcock: First: 3 on 6 Mar in *Polk* (JB). A total of 16 were found displaying at several locations at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 21 Mar (CRE). Adults with downy young were observed in *Decatur* (SSP) and *Winneshiek* (DK).

Wilson's Phalarope: First: 20 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE). Most: 65 on 30 Apr and 75 on 6 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (CNK, LJP, BKP, PEL) and 80 on 10 May at Hawkeye WA (CRE). Three males were still at Dunbar Sl *Greene* 30 May (SSP).

Red-necked Phalarope: All: 19 May at New L *Woodbury* (BFH), 3 on 27 May in *Kossuth* (MCK), 30 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SSP-photo), and 30 May in *Kossuth* (MCK).

Franklin's Gull: First: 2 on 15 Mar at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (LJP, BKP). Most: 1,300 on 15 May at Grover's L *Dickinson* (LAS). 250 were still at Moeckly Pr *Polk* 29 May (AB).

Bonaparte's Gull: First: 3 on 31 Mar at Rice L *Winnebago* (RGo) and 19 also on 31 Mar at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (SSP). Most: 96 on 4 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE). Last: 16 May at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DC).

Ring-billed Gull: Most: 14,000 on 25 Mar at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB) and 21,000 on 31 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE).

CALIFORNIA GULL: A report was referred to the Records Committee.

Herring Gull: Most: 1,300 on 12 Mar at Coralville Res *Johnson* (CRE). Last: 12 May at Jester P *Polk* (DTh).

Thayer's Gull: All: An adult 6 Mar at Credit Island *Scott* (SMF), a juv 27 Mar at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (Jon Strong-details), and 1st-year bird 19 Apr at Coralville Res *Johnson* (JLF-details) [second latest].

Lesser Black-backed Gull: All: an adult 6 Mar at Credit Island *Scott* (SMF-details), an adult 26 Mar at L Manawa

Pottawattamie (LJP, BKP-details), an adult 28 Mar at Rice L *Worth* (PH-details), and 4 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE*) [record latest].

Glaucous Gull: All: 2 adults and one juv 6 Mar at Credit Island *Scott* (SMF) and a juv 12–14 Mar at Coralville Res *Johnson* (CRE, DP).

Caspian Tern: First: 3 on 5 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Most: 142 on 12 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Last: 2 on 14 May at Cedar L *Linn* (DLF).

Common Tern: First: 27 Apr at Meier WA *Hardin* (MPr-details). Like Spring 2004, Common Terns were found in unusually large flocks: 38 on 7 May at Montrose *Lee* (PEL), 43 and 65 counted on 12 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD, JJD, DTh), and 20 also on 12 May at L&D 14 *Scott* (SMF). Last: 2 on 21 May at Rathbun Res *Appanoose* (RLC) and 3 on 25 May at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (PH, MCK).

Forster's Tern: First: 5 on 16 Apr at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (LJP, BKP) and 2 also on 16 Apr at Rathbun Res *Appanoose* (RLC). Most: 35 on 12 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh).

Least Tern: All: 2 on 19 May at MidAmerican Ponds *Pottawattamie* (CRE), but only one was left at that location 20 May (RIA, PHA).

Black Tern: First: 2 on 2 May at East Twin L *Hancock* (SSP). Most: 500 on 14 May at New L *Woodbury* (GLV). There were still 165 present 30 May at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS).

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Collared-Doves continued to be found in *Marshall*, *Marion*, *Story*, *Kossuth*, *Polk*, *Guthrie*, *Winnebago*, *Warren*, *Poweshiek*, and *Boone*. New county records were reported for *Muscatine*, *Clinton*, *Mahaska*, and *Winneshiek* (MHB, PVN, RIA, PHA, DC).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE: One visited a feeder in Sioux City *Woodbury* 10–13 Apr (fide Jack Curran-photos).

Black-billed Cuckoo: First: 12 May at Amana Nature Trail Iowa (DP). They were later found in *Pottawattamie*, *Decatur*, *Lee*, *Johnson*, and *Washington* (MOr, JRL, JG, MCD, CJC, CRE)

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: First: 7 May at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (JLF) and 8 May at Cedar Rapids *Linn* (DLF). They were reported from ten additional counties.

Barn Owl: The only one: 28 Mar at Otter Cr M *Tama* (RIA, PHA).

Snowy Owl: A lone report: 15 Mar in Lyon (ETh).

NORTHERN HAWK OWL: "Manly" entertained visitors in *Worth* until 2 Apr (AJ, RGo, PH).

GREAT GRAY OWL: One first found near Decorah *Winneshiek* 6–7 Apr by David Cavagnaro was relocated and photographed 17 Apr (fide DC; 12 May 2005 *Decorah Journal*).

Long-eared Owl: All: 8 Mar at Worth Co P *Worth* (RGo), 9 Mar at Pleasant Cr RA *Linn* (SMF), and 2 on 16 Mar at Lime Cr Nature Center *Cerro Gordo* (PH).

Short-eared Owl: All: 4 on 1 Mar in *Wayne* (RIA, PHA), 6 Mar at Hooper WA *Warren* (JG), 10 Mar in *Decatur* (JLF), 2 on 26 Mar at Kellerton BCA *Ringgold* (JG), 2 on 16 Apr in *Wayne* (RLC), 24 Apr at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ), and 28 Apr in *Winnebago* (CJF).

Northern Saw-whet Owl: All: 2 Mar at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr), 3 Mar at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB), 3 on 20 Mar at Grammer Grove WA (MPr), and 2 Apr at L Meyer *Winneshiek* (Larry Reis fide DC).

Common Nighthawk: First: 7 May in *Warren* (JB).

Chuck-will's-widow: There was one report from "The Chuck Spot" near Waubonsie SP *Fremont*: 19 May (CRE).

Whip-poor-will: First: 18 Apr in *Johnson* (CRE). One on 24 May at

Deception Hollow *Webster* was the most northwesterly of only seven reports.

Chimney Swift: First: 13 Apr at Dean Appanoose (RLC).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: First: 20 Apr at Johnston *Polk* (DTh-details) [record earliest], and the next was 27 Apr at Algona *Kossuth* (Ray Johnson fide MCK).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: First: one at L Ahquabi SP *Warren* 6 Mar was probably a winterer. Eight of ten first arrivals were from the first ten days in April. The usual probable north Iowa nesters were seen 23–29 May at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (EB), 24 May at Bacon Cr P *Woodbury* (GLV), and 26 May Burr Oak *Winneshiek* (DC).

Northern Flicker: A Red-shafted Flicker was observed 20 Mar at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE).

Pileated Woodpecker: Perhaps becoming more widespread in northcentral Iowa, birds were found 9 May at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (CJF), 21 May in *Floyd* (RGo), and 24 May in *Worth* (RGo).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: First: 7 May at both Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (THK) and Croton Unit *Lee* (JLF). They were observed 29–31 May in *Poweshiek*, *Story*, *Dallas*, *Webster*, and *Marshall* (BVa, WO, JB, MHB, MPr).

Eastern Wood-Pewee: One was observed singing 17 Apr at Rush L *Palo Alto* (LAS-details) [record earliest]. The next was reported 29 Apr at Squaw Cr P *Linn* (DLF) [third earliest].

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: First: 15 May in *Poweshiek* (BVa). Last: fifteen birds were reported from eight locations 25–31 May (MOr, PH, MCK, AB, CJC, DTh, MPr). Like dowitchers, few birders supported their Empid identifications.

Acadian Flycatcher: First: 7 May at Croton Unit *Lee* (JLF). Most: 20 on 30 May at Brinton Timber *Washington* (CRE).

Alder Flycatcher: First: 13 May at West Des Moines *Polk* (JB-details). Last: 14 birds were reported from nine locations 27–31 May (CJC, KN, WO, MCK, DTh, CRE, SSP).

Willow Flycatcher: First: 3 on 17 May at South Sycamore Bottoms *Johnson* (CRE). Most: 8 on 21 May at Rathbun Res *Appanoose* (RLC).

Least Flycatcher: First: 7 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr) and 5 on 9 May at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH). Last: 2 on 31 May at Algona *Kossuth* (MCK).

Eastern Phoebe: First: 22 Mar in *Decatur* (JRL).

VERMILION FLYCATCHER: Iowa's fifth, a male, was discovered 15 May by Joe Monahan at Whiterock NA *Guthrie* and remained on territory into summer (m.ob.).

Great Crested Flycatcher: First: 29 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL).

Western Kingbird: Away from *Pottawattamie*, *Woodbury*, and *Monona*, one was at L Ahquabi SP *Warren* 14 May (CJC, DAK) and another in *Johnson* 23 May (CJC).

Eastern Kingbird: First: 26 Apr at Centerville *Appanoose* (RLC).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: One was photographed 27 May in *Boone*, but not relocated (Mark McInroy-photo). There were two additional IABirds listserv reports about that same time in SE and SW Iowa, but no details were submitted.

Loggerhead Shrike: There were reports of 1 or 2 birds in twenty counties east from *Fremont* to *Greene* to *Dickinson*.

Northern Shrike: Seven birds were reported from seven counties, the farthest south on 19 and 27 Mar at Pleasant Cr RA *Linn* (DLF, DP) and 27 Mar at Chichauqua WA *Polk* (RIA, PHA).

White-eyed Vireo: First: 4 May at Stephens SF *Lucas* (RIA, PHA). They were

also found in *Johnson*, *Warren*, *Lee*, *Linn*, and *Marshall*.

Bell's Vireo: First: 7 May in Ann Johnson's yard *Warren* and 9 May in *Hancock* (PH, RGo). *Woodbury* was the Bell's Vireo capital of Iowa, with 12 on 19 May at Brown's L (GLV) and 17 on 28 May at Sioux City Pr (GLV).

Yellow-throated Vireo: First: 2 May in *Decatur* (JRL) and then three locations on 6–7 May.

Blue-headed Vireo: First: 6 May at Otter Cr P *Warren* (JB). Most: 9 on 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP). Last: 2 on 20 May at L Meyer *Winneshek* (DC).

Warbling Vireo: There was a flurry of early birds: 20 Apr in *Jefferson* (DiP*), 20 Apr at Macbride RA *Johnson* (DP), 5 on 20 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (JLF), and 21 Apr at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAK) — the second and third earliest dates on record.

Philadelphia Vireo: First: 7 May in *Decatur* (JRL). Most: 4 on 18 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP). Last: 28 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr).

Red-eyed Vireo: First: 5 May in *Decatur* (JRL) and then 7 May at both Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr) and in *Appanoose* (RLC).

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE: A report was referred to the Records Committee.

Purple Martin: First: 8 on 2 Apr at Bussey L *Clayton* swelled to an amazing 380 at that location 6 Apr (DAK).

Tree Swallow: Two on 16 Mar at Little Wall L *Hamilton* were hunting insects over patches of ice (SSP-details) [ties second earliest]. The next were 2 on 19 Mar at Cedar L *Linn* (BSc).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: First: 4 on 9 Apr at Palisades-Kepler SP *Linn* (BSc).

Bank Swallow: First: 19 Apr at Alden *Hardin* (MPr). Most: 50 at the Port Neal Ponds *Woodbury* 23 Apr (BFH).

Cliff Swallow: First: 20 on 19 Apr at Iowa City *Johnson* (JPB).

Barn Swallow: First: 10 Apr at Dean Appanoose (RLC) followed by 12 Apr in Decatur (JRL) and 3 on 12 Apr in *Jefferson* (DiP).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Iowa's second successful nesting occurred in May at the Shirley Schirck residence in Carroll Carroll. Please see the accompanying note on p. 149 in this issue. Fifteen other May birds were seen at 13 locations, with the last wanderer 30 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr).

Carolina Wren: Other than exploring singles 6 May in *Cerro Gordo* (RGo) and 17 May in *Clayton* (DAK), reports were east and south from *Polk*.

Bewick's Wren: The "junkyard" wrens near Croton Unit *Lee* were relocated (JG-photo, RIA, PHA, MCD, CJC).

House Wren: First: singing 14 Apr at Ann Johnson's yard *Warren* and 2 on 16 Apr at Stephens SF *Lucas* (RLC).

Winter Wren: First: 30 Mar at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr). Last: 2 on 13 May in *Lucas* (BE).

Sedge Wren: First: 3 on 1 May at Jensen M *Madison* (JG) and 2 on 3 May at Cedar Bluffs NA *Mahaska* (SSP).

Marsh Wren: First: 14 Apr at Chichauqua WA *Polk* (SSP-details) [record earliest]. The next was 25 Apr at Otter Cr M *Tama* (MPr).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: First: 20 Mar at Belva-Deer RA *Keokuk* (BSc) and 22 Mar at Pine L SP *Hardin* (MPr). Most: 15 on 3 Apr at Lizard Cr WA *Webster* (MHB).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: First: 29 Mar at Algona *Kossuth* (MCK). Most: 15 on 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP). Last: 20 May at Algona (MCK).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: First: 11 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL).

Veery: First: 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP) and 3 on 9 May at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH). Possible nesting birds

were reported 27 May at Coralville Res *Johnson* (CJC) and 29 May at Hanging Rock Woods *Johnson* (MCD).

Gray-cheeked Thrush: First: 5 May in both *Decatur* (SSP) and at A.A. Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK). Most: 30 on 9 May at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH). Last: 28 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr).

Swainson's Thrush: First: 5 May at both Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo) and A.A. Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK). Widely reported as common: 90 on 9 May at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH), 42 on 14 May at A.A. Call SP (MCK), and 81 on 14 May at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (MOr). Last: 31 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP).

Hermit Thrush: First: 3 Apr at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr) and 2 on 3 Apr at Lizard Cr WA *Webster* (MHB). Most: 10 on 4 Apr at L Meyer *Winneshiek* (Larry Reis fide DC). Last: 4 May at Grammer Grove WA and Liscomb *Marshall* (MPr), 4 on 4 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), and 2 on 5 May at A.A. Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK).

Wood Thrush: First: 3 on 1 May at Summerset Trail *Warren* (RTTr) and then 5 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo). Most: 11 on 30 May at Brinton Timber *Washington* (CRE, CJC).

Varied Thrush: Bruce Morrison photographed a stunning male in his yard in *O'Brien* 22 May [record latest].

Gray Catbird: First: 5 May in *Jefferson* (DiP) and *Decatur* (JRL)

Northern Mockingbird: Five were found 3 Apr in *Muscatine* (CRE, CJC); thereafter, only single birds were found. Other than 25 Apr into May at Burr Oak *Winneshiek* (DC) and 9 May at Forest City *Hancock* (PH, RGo, CJF), they were found south and east from *Boone* (19 May WO).

Brown Thrasher: First: 3 Apr in *Johnson* (CRE) and 4 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL).

American Pipit: First: 9 on 19 Mar at Saylorville *Polk* (AB) and 4 on 19 Mar at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (BFH). Most: 58 on 5 Apr in *Winneshiek* (DK), 75 on 8 Apr in *Polk* (DTh), 70 on 10 Apr in *Kossuth* (PH, RGo), and 49 on 1 May in *Clayton* (DAK). Last: 3 on 6 May in *Mahaska* (SSP).

Blue-winged Warbler: First: 5 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (DP, MCD).

Golden-winged Warbler: First: 4 May in *Jefferson* (DiP). They were reported from twelve counties, with the highest count 10 on 15 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (CRE). Last: 17 May at Pine L SP *Hardin* (MPr).

Tennessee Warbler: First: 6 May in *Hardin* (MPr), *Story* (SSP), and *Warren* (JB). Most: 46 on 14 May at L Ahquabi SP *Warren* (SSP) and 60 on 16 May at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (CRE). Two were still singing 29 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP).

Orange-crowned Warbler: First: singing birds 10 Apr at Walnut Woods SP *Polk* (RIA, PHA) [record earliest] and 12 Apr at Pine L SP *Hardin* (MPr) [second earliest]. Last: 21 May in *Floyd* (RGo, PH).

Nashville Warbler: First: 6 May in *Cerro Gordo*, *Jefferson*, *Warren*, and *Story* (RGo, DiP, JB, SSP). Most: 14 on 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP). Last: 24 May in *Cerro Gordo* (RGo).

Northern Parula: First and most: 10 on 16 Apr at Stephens SF *Lucas* (RLC).

Yellow Warbler: More early arrivals: 20 Apr in *Jefferson* (DiP-details) [record earliest], 22 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (JJD-details) [second earliest], 22 Apr at Pleasant Cr RA *Linn* (DP), and 25 Apr at Diamond L *Poweshiek* (MPr).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: First: 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP). Most: 10 on 15 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (CRE). Late birds 29 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr), 30 May at Brinton Timber *Washington* (CRE, CJC), and 30 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo*

(RGo) could be nesting nearby.

Magnolia Warbler: First: 4 on 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP) and 2 on 8 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr). Most: 6 on 14 May in *Poweshiek* (BVa). Last: 30 May in *Washington* (CRE).

Cape May Warbler: All: 14–15 May at Woodland Mounds Pres and L Ahquabi SP *Warren* (CJC, MPr, JJD, SSP, AJ, JB), 15 May at Iowa City *Johnson* (CRE, MCD), and 21 May in *Floyd* (PH, RGo).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: First: 7 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL). Most: 45 on 7 May at Coralville Res *Johnson* (CRE). Last: 21 May in *Floyd* (RGo).

Black-throated Green Warbler: First: 4 May at Macbride RA *Johnson* (DP). Most: 6 on 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP) and 5 on 7 May at Macbride RA (CRE). Last: 31 May at Pine L SP *Hardin* (MPr).

Blackburnian Warbler: First: 7 May near Nevada *Story* and 3 on 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (HZ, SSP). Most: 8 on 15 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (CRE). Last: 26 May at Burr Oak *Winneshiek* (DC).

Yellow-throated Warbler: Reported from nine counties south and east from *Boone*, except 23 Apr to 1 May at Pike's Peak SP *Clayton* (DAK). Five were in *Van Buren* 9 Apr (RLC) and one was a rarity 29 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP).

Pine Warbler: Only one: 20 Apr at Pike's Peak SP *Clayton* (DAK*).

Palm Warbler: First: 20 Apr at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (FL). Like last year, the peak occurred on the last day reported: 12 on 15 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 8 on 15 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (CRE).

Bay-breasted Warbler: First: 2 on 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP). Last: 29 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr).

Blackpoll Warbler: First: 30 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL), then not until 6 May at Otter Cr P *Warren* (JB). Most: 8 on 15 May at L Ahquabi SP *Warren* (SSP). Last: 30 May at Lizard Cr WA *Webster* (MHB).

Cerulean Warbler: First: 21 Apr at Beam Woods *Jones* (CRE) [third earliest]. There were reports of some healthy numbers: 6 on 16 May at Macbride RA *Johnson* (CJC), 5 on 18 May at Pike's Peak SP *Clayton* (DAK), 9 on 27–28 May at two locations around Coralville Res *Johnson* (CJC), 3 on 29 May at Croton Unit *Lee* (CJC), 6 on 30 May at Brinton Timber *Washington* (CJC, CRE), and 4 on 31 May at L Ahquabi SP *Warren* (JS).

Black-and-white Warbler: First: 5 on 5 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo). Most: 11 on 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP). Last: one was still at Brinton Timber *Washington* 30 May (CJC).

American Redstart: First reported 7 May from *Marshall* (MPr), *Story* (SSP), and Coralville Res *Johnson*, where 32 redstarts were counted (CRE).

Prothonotary Warbler: First: 16 Apr at Cumming wetlands *Warren* (JG-photo) [record earliest]. From the outer edge of their range: 14 May at Kettleson Hogsback *Dickinson* (LAS, ETh) and 16 May at Whiterock NA *Guthrie* (JJD).

Worm-eating Warbler: 1–3 were reported in May from Croton and Donnellson Units *Lee*.

Ovenbird: First: 4 on 24 Apr at Woodland Mounds Pres *Warren* (JG, JB). Most: 25 on 30 May at Brinton Timber *Washington* (CJC, CRE).

Northern Waterthrush: First: 4 May in *Johnson*, *Marshall*, and *Appanoose* (CRE, MPr, RLC). Most: 12 on 13 May at Banner WA *Warren* (AB). Last: 28 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

Louisiana Waterthrush: First: 2 on 9 Apr in *Van Buren* (RLC). One on territory 24 May at Dolliver SP *Webster* was at the NW corner of its Iowa range (SSP),

making one on 12 Apr at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* an overshoot (RGo). Eleven were counted 29 May at Croton Unit *Lee* (CJC).

Kentucky Warbler: They were reported from eight SE counties, except for two possible nesters 27 May at Stone SP *Woodbury* (GLV). First: 5 May at Nine Eagles SP *Decatur* (SSP). Most: 9 on 30 May at Brinton Timber *Washington* (CRE).

Connecticut Warbler: All: 15 May at Cumming wetlands *Warren* (JG), 19 May at Two Waters WA *Worth* (PH), 20 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), and 21 May at Squaw Cr P *Linn* (DLF).

Mourning Warbler: First: 9 May at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (CJF, RGo). Most: 6 on 30 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr). Two more were still at Lizard Cr WA *Webster* 30 May (MHB).

Common Yellowthroat: First: 21 Apr in *Jefferson* (DiP-details) [ties record earliest].

Hooded Warbler: The first nesters were found 6 May at L Ahquabi SP *Warren* (JB) and 7 May at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (THK, JLF, RIC). Overshoots stopped 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP), 9 May at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH), and one was still present at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* 25–30 May (MPr).

Wilson's Warbler: First: 2 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP). Few were seen until the last: 30 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

Canada Warbler: First: 13 May at West Des Moines *Polk* (JB), followed by 14 May in both *Decatur* (JRL) and *Lucas* (DAK). Most: 4 on 20 May at Decorah *Winneshiek* (DC). Last: 30 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 3 on 30 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo).

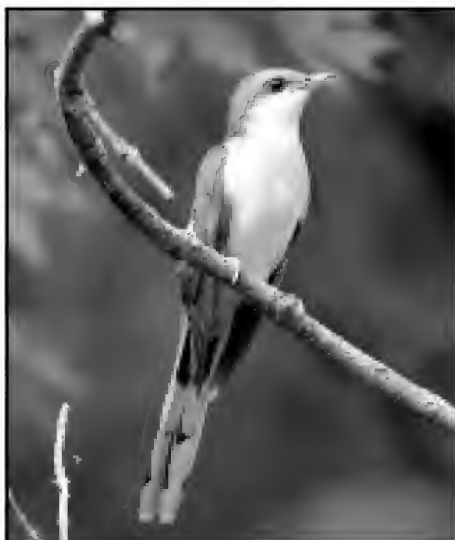
IOU 2005

Photography Contest Winners

IOU is pleased to present the spring 2005 Photography Contest winners. There were 21 excellent entries that challenged judges Linda Bender, an art director and wildlife lover; Ann Johnson, secretary of the IOU Records Committee; and Ty Smedes, a professional photographer. Rules state that difficulty of photographing is a high criterion; therefore, the moving target birds captured the judges attention.



First Place Winner: Cedar Waxwing, Mason City, Cerro Gordo, 11 July 2004. Photograph by Tim McKone, Mason City, IA.



Second Place Winner: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Beaver Bottoms, Dallas, 20 May 2004. Photograph by Dick Stilwell, West Des Moines, IA.



Honorable Mention: Eastern Kingbird, prairie, Franklin, 8 July 2004. Photograph by Tim McKone, Mason City, IA.



*Third Place Winner: Yellow-throated Vireo,
Pinchey Bottoms, Marion, 28 August 2004.
Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*



*Honorable Mention: Northern Saw-whet
Owl, Lime Creek Nature Center, Cerro
Gordo, 22 December 2004. Photograph by
Harsha Jayawardena, Mason City, IA.*



*Honorable Mention: Northern Hawk Owl,
Manly, Winnebago, 19 February 2005.
Photograph by Harsha Jayawardena, Mason
City, IA.*



*Honorable Mention: Blue-gray Gnatcatcher,
Beaver Bottoms, Dallas, 16 April 2005.
Photograph by Dick Stilwell, West Des
Moines, IA*

Yellow-breasted Chat: Most sightings were from Croton and Donnellson Units *Lee*. Others were found 8 and 10 May in *Johnson* (ABW, CRE), 20 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DK), 23 May in *Henry* (RIA, PHA), 23 May at Coon Cr WA *Winneshiek* (DK), and 2 on 30 May in *Jefferson* (DiP).

Summer Tanager: First: 7 May at both hanging Rock Woods *Johnson* (MCD, BSc) and in *Dubuque* (CLW). Reported in the north 10 May at Maynes Grove P *Franklin* (TSS), 12 May at Hartman Reserve *Black Hawk* (KN), and at Carolyn Fischer's home in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* 11–18 May (m.ob.). Late May residents were found up the Missouri R drainage from Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (CRE) to Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (MOR) to Preparation Canyon *Monona* (GLV). An early report was referred to the Records Committee.

Scarlet Tanager: First: 4 May at Liscomb *Marshall* (MPr).

WESTERN TANAGER: Two male birds visited this spring: 11–16 May at Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (CJF*, PH*, DAK*) and 15 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (CRE, MCD). Carolyn Fischer hit the "Tanager Trifecta" at her home 13 May with Scarlet, Summer, and Western all present (CJF-photo of Summer and Western together, see p. 153).

Spotted Towhee: All: 3 May at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (MOR), 5 May at West Des Moines *Polk* (RSS), 14 May at Bacon Cr P *Woodbury* (GLV), and 25 May at Hitchcock NA (MOR) [second latest].

Eastern Towhee: First: 2 Mar in *Decatur* (JRL) was probably a lingering winterer, but 3 on 21 Mar in *Jefferson* were migrants (DiP). Most: 16 on 9 Apr in *Van Buren* (RLC).

American Tree Sparrow: 12 on 26 Mar at Myre Sl *Winnebago* were the last reported (JB).

Chipping Sparrow: First: 1 Apr in *Jefferson* (DiP) and 6 Apr at L Meyer *Winneshiek* (Larry Reis fide DC).

Clay-colored Sparrow: First: 4 May at Wildin Pr *Kossuth* (MCK) and 5 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo). Most: 8 on 11 May at Algona *Kossuth* (MCK). Last: 15 May in *Monroe* (JJD).

Field Sparrow: First: 3 on 2 Apr at Ames *Story* (SSP).

Vesper Sparrow: First: 31 Mar in *Hardin* (SSP) and 1 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (DP).

Lark Sparrow: First: 14 Apr in *Decatur* (JLF). Most: 15 on 21 Apr at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (RLC).

LARK BUNTING: Three males were found 7 May at Gitchie Manitou NA *Lyon* (DEC*).

Savannah Sparrow: Most and the first reported: 40 on 13 Apr at Dean *Appanoose* (RLC).

Grasshopper Sparrow: First: 21 Apr in *Johnson* (CRE).

Henslow's Sparrow: First: in *Ringgold* (JLF) and 3 in *Van Buren* (RLC), both on 9 Apr [third earliest], and 11 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL). Henslow's were found in fifteen additional counties including *Hamilton*, *Kossuth*, *Bremer*, *Boone*, *Hancock*, and *Floyd* in the north (SSP, MCK, KJ, JJD, PH, RGo, PH).

Le Conte's Sparrow: All: 2 on 5 May in *Kossuth* (MCK) and 6 May at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (JLF).

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow: 2–4 birds were found 20–28 May at Doolittle Pr *Story* (SSP-details).

Fox Sparrow: First: 8 Mar in *Allamakee* (FL). The peak occurred 17–29 Mar, with 6 birds reported each from *Pottawattamie*, *Warren*, *Marshall*, and *Johnson* (BE, JG, MPr, CRE).

Lincoln's Sparrow: First: 21 Apr in *Jefferson* (DiP). Most: 10 on 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP). Last: 21 May at Squaw Cr P *Linn* (DLF).

White-throated Sparrow: First: 2 on 12 Apr at Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (RGo). Last: 2 on 16 May at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE).

Harris's Sparrow: There were few reports of only 1–3 birds and only one on 3 Apr at Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (RGo) was before the first week of May.

White-crowned Sparrow: Similar to Harris's, White-crowned didn't arrive until the first week of May, but the most reported were 9 in *Appanoose* (RLC), 12 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE), and 6 in *Story* (MPr), all on 7 May.

Dark-eyed Junco: There were no May reports.

Lapland Longspur: High counts of 2,000 on 19 Mar at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (GLV) dropped to 200 on 31 Mar at Hanlontown M *Worth* (RGo) and 200 on 3 Apr in *Johnson* (CJC, CRE), with the last single on 24 Apr in *Kossuth* (MCK).

Smith's Longspur: All: 20–40 birds were reported 10–16 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JG-photo, CJC, DP, CRE, JLF, THK), 5 on 13 Apr at Union Hills BCA *Cerro Gordo* (RGo-details); late birds at Hawkeye WA dwindled from 30 on 5 May (JLF, THK) to 15 on 7 May (BSc-details, MCD-details) [ties second latest] to the final 3 on 8 May (CRE) [record latest].

Snow Bunting: Only report: 12 on 23 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DK).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: First: 29 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL).

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK: A male was found 25 May at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (MOR*).

Blue Grosbeak: Reported only from *Pottawattamie* (MOR, LJP, BKP) and *Carroll* (MTh).

LAZULI BUNTING: There were two reports of this species that is probably regular in western Iowa: a male 10–13 May at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* was found dead and is now a specimen at ISU and

another 19 May at a feeder in Sibley *Fremont* (Carl Priebe fide Ross Silcock-details).

Indigo Bunting: First: a male visited a feeder in Algona *Kossuth* 23 Apr to 3 May (MCK) [ties second earliest]. The next wasn't until 5 May in *Jefferson* (DiP).

Dickcissel: First: 6 May at Woodland Mounds Pres *Warren* (JB), followed by 7 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP, CJC) and 3 on 7 May in *Appanoose* (RLC).

Bobolink: First: 30 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL) and 6 May at Rolling Thunder Pr *Warren* (JB).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: First: 8 Apr at both Otter Cr M *Tama* (DP) and Union Hills BCA *Cerro Gordo* (RGo).

Rusty Blackbird: Most: 70 on 21 Mar in *Warren* (JG) and 80 on 2 Apr at Bussey L *Clayton* (DAk).

Brewer's Blackbird: All: 10 on 22 Mar in *Butler* (RGo), 12 on 2 Apr at Two Waters WA *Worth* (RGo), 3 on 2 Apr at Hanlontown M *Worth* (PH), 70 on 3 Apr in *Louisa* (CRE, CJC, DP), 40 on 7 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JLF), 12 on 24 Apr at Bauer Sl *Hamilton* (SSP-details), and 2 on 30 Apr at Sandpiper RA *Polk* (DTh-details).

Great-tailed Grackle: Most: 120 coming in to roost the evening of 14 May at Banner WA *Warren* (DAk). They were also reported from *Tama*, *Woodbury*, *Calhoun*, *Hancock*, *Decatur*, *Greene*, *Clinton*, and *Fremont*. One on 21 May in *Floyd* was a new county record (PH).

Orchard Oriole: First: a male 20 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE-details) [record earliest].

Baltimore Oriole: First: 3 on 29 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (JLF). Most: 14 around the feeders at the same time 14 May in *Poweshiek* (BVa).

Purple Finch: Most: 10 on 10 Apr at Dean *Appanoose* (RLC), 9 on 21 Apr at Cedar Rapids *Linn* (DLF), and 12 on 3 May at A.A. Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK).

House Finch: Danny counted 120 on 19 Mar at Garnavillo *Clayton* (DAK).

Red Crossbill: The wintering pair of crossbills at Thorpe P *Winnebago* remained until 3 Mar (LSR).

Common Redpoll: A few stragglers remained in northern Iowa into March: 1–3 were found at Manly *Worth* (ETh), Garnavillo *Clayton* (DAK), Lost Island L *Palo Alto* (PEL), and 13–19 Mar at Sioux City *Woodbury* (GLV).

Pine Siskin: Most: 16 on 19 Mar at Garnavillo *Clayton* (DAK) and 25 on 26 Mar at Hoffman Pr *Cerro Gordo* (RGo). Siskins lingered into May: 2 on 16 May in *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), 18 May at Garnavillo (DAK), 25 May at Sioux City *Woodbury* (GLV), 29 May at Cedar Rapids *Linn* (BSc), and 31 May at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (EB).

Eurasian Tree Sparrow: Reported from *Muscatine*, *Johnson*, and *Louisa* (RIA, PHA, CRE).

CONTRIBUTORS

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COMMENT

Many thanks to everyone who used the online system for contributing their spring birding observations! This feature enabled me to go on vacation with my family after school got out in early June without the worry of long hours of data entry waiting for me when I got home.

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American Bittern, Colo Ponds, Story, 30 April 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Yellow-breasted Chat, Croton Unit of Shimek State Forest, Lee, 21 May 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks near Alden, Hardin, 19 April 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Upland Sandpiper near Sedan Bottoms, Appanoose, 22 May 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



This Vermilion Flycatcher was an unexpected spring arrival at Whiterock Conservancy, Guthrie, 18 May 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Black-necked Stilt, McIntosh Woods, Cerro Gordo, 25 May 2005. Photograph by John Morrison, Austin, MN.



Hooded Warbler, Donnellson Unit of Shimek State Forest, Lee, 21 May 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Kentucky Warbler, Croton Unit of Shimek State Forest, Lee, 21 May 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Little Blue Heron, Bauer Slough, Hamilton, 24 April 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Record early Prothonotary Warbler, Cumming wetlands, Warren, 16 April 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Red-necked Grebe, Otter Creek Marsh, Tama, 23 April 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

Records Committee Report for 2004

Ann M. Johnson

The Records Committee had a very busy year; 70 reports, including one old report from 1874, were reviewed. Of the 69 reports for 2004, 51 were accepted and 18 were not. The AOU split Canada Goose, which added Cackling Goose to the state list (# 408). Other additions in 2004 were Baird's Sparrow (# 409) and Boreal Owl (# 410).

Committee members for 2004, with years in which their terms expire, were Jim Sinclair (2004), Thomas H. Kent (2005), Lee Schoenewe (2006), James J. Dinsmore (2007), Aaron Brees (2008), Matt Kenne (2009), and Ann M. Johnson (secretary, appointed by the committee). Paul Hertzell (2010) was nominated by the committee and appointed by the Board of Directors to fill a regular term beginning in 2005. Thomas H. Kent resigned at the conclusion of 2004 and Mike Overton (2005) was nominated and appointed to fill the final year of Kent's term.

The majority of reports were submitted on-line through the IOU website. The ease of doing this no doubt contributed to the increase in reports, and the committee is gratified to have more people reporting. Even reports that are not accepted become a permanent part of the archives of Iowa birds and could be important to future researchers.

The four-digit number (year and sequence number) assigned to each record reviewed by the Records Committee is included for future reference. Records are classified as follows: A = Accepted (-S = specimen, -P = photograph, -R = recording, -D = documentation) and NA = Not Accepted. To be Accepted, a record must receive seven votes on the initial review or six votes on a subsequent review. The subcategories A-S, A-P, and A-R indicate that physical evidence supports the identification, and records are subclassified based on a majority vote. References to IBL are the page of the field reports in *Iowa Bird Life* where the record is cited. P- numbers refer to the IOU Photo File entry number. Published notes and previous citations may contain more details. An * indicates a previously uncited documentation. Counties are italicized.

2004 RECORDS ACCEPTED

Harlequin Duck: 12 to 13 Jan at Saylorville Res *Polk* (04-03, *IBL* 74:40, 42 [Brees 2005]) and 29 Feb to 6 Mar at Pool 15 Scott (04-10, P-1024, *IBL* 74:40, 42).

Red-necked Grebe: 24 Nov at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (04-49, *IBL* 75:9).

Neotropical Cormorant: 19 to 20 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (04-47, P-1035, *IBL* 75:7, 10).

Swallow-tailed Kite: 3 to 4 Jun at Iowa City *Johnson* (04-31, P-1033, *IBL* 74:137, 140, cover [Scheib 2004]).

Ferruginous Hawk: 19 Sep and 23 Nov at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (04-40, *IBL* 75:7, 11 *Jerry Toll and 04-48, *IBL* 75:7, 11 *Mark Orsag).

Black Rail: 4 May at Davis City *Decatur* (04-18, *IBL* 74:93, 97 *Jeff Livingston).

King Rail: 11 to 16 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (04-21, P-1027, *IBL* 74:93, 97 [Dick and Huntington 2005]).

Snowy Plover: 8 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (04-20, *IBL* 74:93, 97 [Fuller and Kent 2005]).

Whimbrel: 17 May at Jester Park *Polk* (04-22, *IBL* 74:93, 98) and 28 May Hancock (04-35, *IBL* 74:93, 98).

Red Knot: 1 Aug at Coralville Res *Johnson* (04-37, *IBL* 75:7, 13) and 26 Aug at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (04-65, *IBL* 75:7, 13 *Chris Edwards).

Laughing Gull: 5 May at Credit Island *Scott* (04-19, *IBL* 74:99 *Dan Dorrance).

California Gull: 12 Dec at Saylorville Res *Polk* (04-61, P-1036, *IBL* 75:61, 65, 70 *Aaron Brees, Jay Gilliam)

Iceland Gull: 8 to 12 Feb at Davenport *Scott* (04-66, P-1038, *IBL* 75:61, 65); 10 Feb at Davenport *Scott* (04-67, *IBL* 75:61, 65); 29 Feb at Davenport *Scott* (04-68, *IBL* 75:61, 65); and 28 Mar at Jester Park *Polk* (04-12, *IBL* 74:93, 100).

Great Black-backed Gull: 22 Feb at Lock & Dam 14 *Scott* (04-07, *IBL* 74:40, 45) and 29 Dec at Pool 15 *Scott* (04-69, *IBL* 75:65).

Black-legged Kittiwake: 27 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (04-56, *IBL* 75:7, 15); 20 Dec at Keokuk Lee (04-62, *IBL* 75:61, 65, 78, 90 *Mike Overton); 26 to 27 Dec at Red Rock Res Marion (04-63, P-1037, *IBL* 75:61, 65); and 30 Dec at Lock & Dam 14 *Scott* (04-64, *IBL* 75:61, 65).

White-winged Dove: 28 Jun at Ottosen *Humboldt* (04-33, *IBL* 74:137, 144) and 29 Jun at Liscomb *Marshall* (04-30, *IBL* 74:137, 144).

Groove-billed Ani: 20 to 24 Oct near Ottumwa *Wapello* (04-45, *IBL* 75:7, 16).

Burrowing Owl: 26 to 31 Mar *Kossuth* (04-29, P-1032, *IBL* 74:93, 100).

Boreal Owl: 12 Nov at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (04-52, P-1039, *IBL* 75:7, 16; 75:93, 94, cover [Garrett 2005]).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: 4 Apr north of Fayette *Fayette* (04-44).

Mountain Bluebird: 28 Feb at Black Hawk Co. Park *Black Hawk* (04-09, *IBL* 74:40, 46).

Townsend's Solitaire: 10 Sep at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (04-53, *IBL* 75:7, 18); 12 Sep at Little Sioux Access *Clay* (04-54, *IBL* 75:7, 18); and 24 Oct at Trumbull L *Clay* (04-55, *IBL* 75:7, 18).

Swainson's Thrush: 18 Apr at Coralville *Johnson* (04-15, P-1025, *IBL* 74:103).

Sprague's Pipit: 5 May at Eagle L *Hancock* (04-25, *IBL* 74:93, 103 *Rita Goranson [Goranson 2005]).

Bohemian Waxwing: 6 to 7 Jan at Lime Creek NC *Cerro Gordo* (04-01, *IBL* 74:40, 46); 13 Nov at Sheldon O'Brien (04-57, *IBL* 75:19); 21 Nov at Marble Beach SP *Dickinson* (04-58, *IBL* 75:19); 26 to 28 Nov at Milford *Dickinson* (04-59, *IBL* 75:19); and 6 Dec at Spirit Lake *Dickinson* (04-60, *IBL* 75:61, 67).

Pine Warbler: 5 to 10 Jul at Shimek SF *Lee* (04-34, *IBL* 74:137, 146).

Western Tanager: 29 Apr to 1 May at Algona *Kossuth* (04-16, P-1026, *IBL* 74: 93).

Baird's Sparrow: 4 Jun *Cherokee* (04-32, *IBL* 74:137, 142).

Golden-crowned Sparrow: 24 Jan to 15 Feb at Lake Meyer NC *Winnebago* (04-05, P-1023, *IBL* 74:40, 47).

Black-headed Grosbeak: 1 May at Iowa City *Johnson* (04-17, *IBL* 74:93, 106 *John Bollenbacher [Bollenbacher 2005]).

Lazuli Bunting: 18 May at Westfield *Plymouth* (04-24, P-1028, *IBL* 74:93, 106); 19 to 26 May at Spirit Lake *Dickinson* (04-27, P-1030, *IBL* 74:93, 106); and 28 to 29 May at Spirit Lake *Dickinson* (04-28, P-1031, *IBL* 74:93, 106).

2004 RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

Whooper Swan: Because swans have a long life, another Midwestern report of this species was presumed one of the escapees from Illinois several years ago (04-04, *IBL* 74:40, 41).

Eurasian Wigeon: This was a difficult report for the committee. Although multiple observers saw the bird, only one provided a brief description. Members thought that the identification was no doubt correct but the brevity of the description with no corroborating descriptions could not stand the test of time (04-11, *IBL* 74:93, 94).

Sharp-tailed Grouse: A report accompanied by a photo was not in doubt as to species but was certainly a part of the reintroduction in western Iowa. More reports of this species will be helpful to determine if a population becomes established (04-02, P-1029, *IBL* 74:95).

Gyr Falcon: This species is always difficult to evaluate because the best description has few concrete identifying details. Because the bird was seen for such a brief time as a fly-by at the hawk watch, the committee took a conservative view with a split vote (04-51, *IBL* 75:7, 12, 39).

Black Rail: With a split vote, the committee was reluctant to accept a report of a bird where the observer was not totally confident in his identification (04-42).

Red Knot: In an unusual twist, a photograph did not support the written description and was thought to be a Stilt Sandpiper (04-43, P-1034, *IBL* 75:7, 13).

Ruff: On a split vote, this report was problematic because of the self-doubt of the reporter and lack of a description by the second observer (04-38). Multiple reports give the committee better information to evaluate.

Parasitic Jaeger: Less than optimal viewing conditions left the committee with a sketchy description that was hard to evaluate. Most thought that jaeger sp. was correct but could not be sure beyond that (04-46, *IBL* 75:7, 14).

Iceland Gull: The description was suggestive, but a few critical pieces of information were missing to be certain that this was not a washed out Thayer's Gull (04-26, *IBL* 74:93, 100).

Black-legged Kittiwake: Viewing conditions and a few missing details made the committee reluctant to accept a sighting of an adult bird. Records from the interior of the country are primarily juveniles (04-41, *IBL* 75:7, 15).

Gray Flycatcher: Behavioral description was very suggestive of this species but several morphological characteristics were missing in the documentation. A silent Empidonax flycatcher without other compelling evidence created too much doubt to add this one to the state list (04-39, *IBL* 75:7, 17).

Common Raven: A flying bird observed by a person in a moving vehicle was suggestive but could not convince the committee that it had moved beyond reasonable doubt. Large crows in the wind can be problematic unless one sees a combination of characters (04-08, *IBL* 74:40, 45).

Dark-eyed Junco: Two reports submitted as the "Pink-sided" subspecies generated some interesting discussion with the conclusion that sight reports of this difficult-to-identify form warranted not-accepted classifications at this time (04-13 and 04-36, *IBL* 74:106).

McKay's Bunting: An interesting video was provided of a bird with black and white patterns. While there were superficial similarities to this species, some characteristics did not match up correctly. Because it was feeding with House Sparrows, the best guess was that it was a very abnormally colored House Sparrow (04-50, P-1040, *IBL* 75:7, 22).

Black-headed Grosbeak: Because there was no description of the bill, the committee thought that Spotted Towhee could not be eliminated by the description (04-23, *IBL* 74:106).

Lazuli Bunting: While parts of the description were suggestive of this species, some details were not consistent and left the committee with reasonable doubt (04-14, *IBL* 74:93, 106).

Hoary Redpoll: This report received a split vote but several members thought that because the best identifying characteristic, the undertail coverts, were not seen it was best to be conservative (04-06, *IBL* 74:40, 48).

OLD RECORDS REVIEWED FOR THE FIRST TIME AND NOT ACCEPTED

Eskimo Curlew: An 1874 newspaper clipping from Omaha described a hunt in Pottawattamie Co. where this species was taken, but no description of the bird made evaluation of the identification impossible (04-AA).

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Nesting King Rails in Warren County

Jay Gilliam

On the evening of 10 May 2005, I stopped at the Cumming wetlands as I usually do on my way home from work. I parked along the road and glassed the water to look for birds but there were not many to be found. Besides the many singing bullfrogs and Red-winged Blackbirds, I heard a Virginia Rail way off in the distance. Closer to the road I heard a “kek-kek-kek” call but it did not register in my mind at the time so I drove down the road. I made it about a half-mile before it dawned on me that I might have been hearing a King Rail. The only other experience I have had with the King Rail was the one that was found at Hawkeye Wildlife Area in May 2004 (Dick and Huntington 2005) and this call reminded me of that bird. I quickly turned around and drove back and closely listened to the nonstop “kek-kek-kek” while trying to get my CD player in my truck to work so I could play the King Rail call and compare it. Unfortunately, the CD player in my truck decided to stop working at that moment so I called John Bissell and he played the King Rail calls over the phone. I was confident that there was a King Rail at the wetlands but it was too dark to look for it.

The next morning I got my CD player to work so I stopped by the wetlands on my way to work and played it while parked on the road again. Within minutes a King Rail came running through the grass towards the road to find the “other” King Rail that was calling. It was a large rail with a long, slightly down-curved bill that was darker on the upper and orangish on the lower bill. It was dark gray on top of the head and had a light superciliary line. The throat was white and the front of its neck, breast, and upper belly were orange-rufous in color. The upper parts were dark brown with some patterning. The flanks were dark, almost black, with light vertical barring. It had a short tail that flashed white as it held it stiff and upright.

I called several birders that day and met Jim Sinclair there after work. We both saw the rail again as it was running around the small pond near the road. We were thrilled about the rail's presence because the Cumming wetlands area was going to be my area to lead a field trip at the spring IOU meeting the following weekend. If the rail did not leave, there would be an opportunity for a lot of birders to observe it while participating in the IOU field trips.

The spring IOU meeting was held at Wesley Woods near Indianola on 14–15 May 2005 and I led two large groups of birders to the Cumming wetlands in search of the King Rail and other birds. We started off the first day by seeing a Least Bittern at the small pond near the road where I had seen the rail, but the rail was calling from further down the shoreline of the larger pond. The rail was very cooperative on both days and responded aggressively to the tape I played. Everybody had great looks at this bird as it walked right past the group calling “kek-kek-kek.” On the second day, we stood very still as it walked within fifteen feet of some of the birders. Needless to say, the birders were thrilled with this great sighting. Also on the second day, we were walking back to the cars after seeing the King Rail and we decided to stop to look closely for the Least Bittern at the small pond. Mark Proescholdt walked around the edge of the pond while we all looked on from a distance. Mark flushed a Sora and then a larger bird that we assumed was the Least Bittern. Paul Roisen happened to get a photo of it in flight so we looked at the image on

the back of his camera. The bird in the image looked too rufous-colored to be a Least Bittern so we assumed it was a Virginia Rail (because the chances of finding two King Rails at the same location seemed pretty minimal). Paul e-mailed me the photo the following week and after viewing it on the computer screen I determined it was indeed another King Rail!

The fact that it flushed from the small pond, along with most of my other sightings from that same area, led me to believe the rails might possibly be attempting to nest in that area. I did observe both rails after that on one other occasion. I sent a message to the IA-BIRDS listserv requesting that birders not play tapes when searching for the rails because I did not want to discourage them from nesting attempts. I stopped by the wetlands several times over the next six weeks and just parked on the road to listen for them calling. They continued to call until about the end of June and then I did not hear them on my stops after that. I was worried they had left the area but still hoped that perhaps they were nesting and keeping a low profile.

It was the first week of July before I decided to go in and search for the rails. I thought if they had nested successfully their eggs should have hatched by then. So on 2 July, Kelly Weichers and I ventured into the wetlands in search of the rails. We thoroughly searched the small pond near the road and Kelly observed a King Rail but it disappeared into the tall grasses. We searched the shoreline of the larger area but were unsuccessful so we headed back to the small pond. We again found a King Rail that walked away from the small pond and seemed like it was trying to lead me away from the area. I followed it until we were near the larger area and it did a U-turn and ran back to the small pond. I was ready to give up the search and walk back to the car but Kelly thought she would

wait and watch the area for rails as I walked around the pond. When I neared the edge of the small pond I noticed a King Rail on the other side and with it were three little black balls of fuzz. I excitedly got Kelly's attention and said "Babies, babies!!" She came over to where I was standing and we watched eight King Rail chicks slowly emerge from the grass to be fed by both of the parents (Figure 1). The tiny chicks eventually disappeared into the grass as they followed the parents around the edge of the pond.

King Rail chicks are precocial and leave the nest within one hour of hatching. They remain near the nest site for the first day and are fed by the parents. After the first day, the parents move them to a feeding area away from the nest site (Meanley 1992). Based on this and the fact that they were so small (maybe 3 inches tall) led me to assume they had hatched the morning we were there.

I, and other birders, checked on the rails over the next several weeks. On 9 July, Jim Sinclair and Aaron Brees observed six chicks and one adult in an area along the shore of the larger body of water. On 16 July, I observed both adults and 5 chicks in the



Figure 1. King Rail parent with 1-day old chicks, 2 July 2005. Cumming wetlands, Warren Co. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

same area (Figure 2). On 23 July, I observed and heard one adult but did not locate the other adult or chicks. On 14 August, I observed a fully-feathered six-week old juvenile (Figure 3). It takes 8 to 10 weeks from the time of hatching for the juveniles to be able to fly. Hopefully there were more chicks that survived and the King Rails will return next spring to nest again.

Kent and Dinsmore (1996) note the King Rail as “Regular; nests” and occurs as a rare migrant and summer resident. The King Rail sighting at Hawkeye Wildlife Area last summer was the first reported since 1999. The last report of nesting King Rails was in Des Moines County in 1996.

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Figure 2. King Rail parent with 14-day old chicks, 16 July 2005. Cumming wetlands, Warren Co. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Figure 3. King Rail juvenile at six weeks, 14 August 2005. Cumming wetlands, Warren Co. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

Red-breasted Nuthatches Nest in Carroll

Shirley Schirck

A pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches successfully raised three fledglings in our backyard during spring 2005 (Figures 1–3).

Toward the end of October, three Red-breasted Nuthatches appeared at feeders in our backyard and returned almost daily throughout the winter. They were feasting on beef-kidney suet, safflower and sunflower seed, and raw Spanish peanuts, as well as using our heated bird bath.

In April, I noticed the two males courting the female and chasing away chickadees and White-breasted Nuthatches from the yard. On 3 April, I saw the birds excavating a southeasterly facing cavity in a dead portion of a corkscrew willow tree approximately 13 feet high. The trunk diameter was approximately 5 inches. They made countless trips into and out of the cavity dumping beaks full of “sawdust” into the wind after cautiously glancing all around. The tree grows beside a little artificial pond with an electric fountain beside it. Nearby are several feeders as well as plenty of perches and bird baths.

On 19 April, I observed both males guarding the nest site. By 1 May, there appeared to be only one male and one female. They made trips from a neighbor’s pine trees carrying pine pitch, which they proceeded to smear around the entrance hole.

I observed the male feeding the female on the nest on 4 May. She appeared at the entrance hole to accept the food.

On 16 May, Rita Efta banded the male and female. They were busily feeding insects, suet, and nuts to nestlings, as well as taking fecal sacs from the nest cavity. In a 30-minute period, I observed the pair make 17 trips to the nest cavity with food.

On 24 May, fledglings appeared at the entrance hole to receive food. I found one young bird dead on the ground beneath the tree.

By 27 May, the young were poking their heads out farther to get food from the parents. They left the nest on 30 May and Stanley Buman was present to photograph them. Both parents continued feeding the three fledglings and one parent pecked at my finger as I held out a handful of peanuts for him/her to take. On 10 June, a fledgling successfully clung to the peanut feeder gorging itself. On 20 June, I received a call from a birder who lives six blocks from me; she said three young Red-breasted Nuthatches were in her yard feeding at suet and seed feeders hanging in her locust trees. I went to her yard on 25 June and saw all three fledglings



Figure 1. Male Red-breasted Nuthatch excavating nest cavity in Schirck yard on 5 April 2005. Photograph by Stanley Buman, Carroll, IA.

happily feeding and chattering to each other. I was elated to see that they were still together and doing well.

The House Wrens were late in coming this spring and I think that was a key factor in the successful nesting attempt of the nuthatches. In 2003, a pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches excavated a cavity in another branch of the same corkscrew willow tree, but they were driven away by the arrival of the House Wrens that spring. As of 27 June 2005, I no longer saw the parents in my yard.

There is one previous confirmed report of Red-breasted Nuthatches nesting in Des Moines (Kent and Dinsmore 1996) and one report of an abandoned Red-breasted Nuthatch nest in Jester Park, Polk County (Kenne 2004).

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Figure 2. Female Red-breasted Nuthatch banded by Rita Efta in Schirck yard on 16 May 2005. Photograph by Zola Beckman, rural Lake City, IA.



Figure 3. Fledgling Red-breasted Nuthatch below nest site in Schirck yard on fledging day, 30 May 2005. Photograph by Stanley Buman, Carroll, IA.

Neotropic Cormorant at Saylorville Reservoir

Aaron Brees

On Friday, 19 November 2004, I made a trip to Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County. My first stop was the top of the dam, where I could see a number of birds congregated at Lakeview Recreation Area near the west end of the dam. At Lakeview, a long, rock jetty projects out into the lake. This jetty often provides a protected resting area for birds, and pelicans, cormorants, terns, and gulls can often be found crowded along the outer half.

After driving down to the Lakeview parking lot, I found approximately 70 American White Pelicans and 175 Double-crested Cormorants roosting on the jetty. After counting the birds, I began carefully looking through the Double-crested Cormorants, searching for a Neotropic Cormorant. After Iowa's first Neotropic Cormorant was found in 1996 (Dinsmore 1997), I started scanning flocks of double-cresteds looking for the smaller vagrant species. Closely looking at cormorant flocks regularly produces noticeably smaller individuals, but these have always proven to be small double-cresteds. So, I did not get too excited when I came across a small cormorant in the middle of the flock. However,

after observing the bird for awhile, and finally getting clear looks at its head, it became clear that the bird was a legitimate Neotropic Cormorant (Figure 1). The bird was about two-thirds the size of the adjacent double-cresteds, being shorter and less massively built. It seemed to have a proportionally longer and slimmer neck, and the head appeared more streamlined than the double-crested. The tail was similar in length to those of the larger double-crested, and therefore proportionally longer. The Neotropic Cormorant was similar in color to the adult double-crested, being a dark brownish black. The most significant differences, which clinched the identification, were in the structure of the bill. Overall, the bill was shorter and thinner than the bills of the double-crested. At the base of the bill, the area called the gular patch tapered back in



Figure 1. Neotropic Cormorant (on right) with Double-crested Cormorants at Saylorville Reservoir on 19 November 2004. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

a narrow "V"-shape under the eye. This contrasted with the double-crested gular patches that were wide and rounded or squared off. With a good look, white feathering could be seen bordering the lower edge of the bill base. The bill was orange at the base, shading to

yellow in the middle and then gray at the tip. I was never able to see the bird in flight, but others who did commented that the size difference between the two species was much more apparent than when perched. They also noted that the neck/head of the Neotropic Cormorant was about the same length as the tail, while the head/necks of the double-cresteds were longer than the tails, producing quite different impressions in flight.

I watched the bird from about 10:45–11:05 A.M. During this time it sat quietly, occasionally preening. Other birders were able to see the bird that afternoon as it sat on the jetty or flew out onto the lake to feed. Occasionally it was seen flying over the dam and downstream with other cormorants, but it continued to return to the jetty area Friday evening and all day Saturday. Unfortunately, on Sunday the bird could not be relocated despite a thorough search. Approximately one-hundred Double-crested Cormorants had departed, presumably taking the Neotropic with them.

This bird represents the second record of Neotropic Cormorant for Iowa. Neotropic Cormorant is largely a Mexican and Central American species that, until fairly recently, was restricted to southern Texas and Louisiana, with small numbers in Arizona and New Mexico. This range has been expanding north and has produced an increase in vagrants to the Midwest. Iowa has fewer records than Nebraska, Minnesota, Missouri, or Illinois. Presumably this is due, in part, to a lack of consistently searching for it. This species is most likely to occur from late-April through the end of September with Double-crested Cormorants. This November record is unusually late for the upper Midwest, but it does show that it pays to check cormorant flocks anytime they are present.

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Three Tanager Species in Mason City

Carolyn Fischer

On 11 May 2005, while watching Baltimore Orioles at my backyard feeder, I noticed another bird that also was eating the oranges. Realizing it was a male Western Tanager, I quickly reached for my camera and took some photographs (Figure 1). A short time later, another bird flew in and joined the Western Tanager. This was a beautiful female Summer Tanager (Figure 2). On 13 May, the expected male Scarlet Tanager came in for some grape jelly.

The Western and Summer Tanagers were last seen on 17 and 18 of May. They provided two new species for my yard list bringing the total to 188.

A record early male Summer Tanager made an appearance on 11 April 2005 in my backyard, which is north of its summer range.

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Figure 1. Western Tanager, 11 May 2005, Mason City, IA. Photograph by Carolyn Fischer, Mason City, IA.



Figure 2. Summer and Western Tanagers, 11 May 2005, Mason City, IA. Photograph by Carolyn Fischer, Mason City, IA.

Black-necked Stilts, Second Fall Record for Iowa

Aaron Brees and Jim Sinclair

On 28 August 2004, we were birding the portion of Red Rock Wildlife Area commonly referred to as “Runnells Wildlife Area” or “the Runnells Overlook” by birders. This area contained several large shallow pools that were losing water and attracting large numbers of shorebirds. We decided to walk the dirt road out to the easternmost pools that seemed to hold the most birds.

While scanning the shorebird flocks in the east pools, we heard loud, repeated “yapping” calls coming from overhead. Looking up, we saw two Black-necked Stilts dropping in from high altitude out of the northwest. The two birds landed among the other shorebirds in the pool and quickly began to feed. Both birds were dark above and white below with extremely long, bubblegum pink legs and thin, dark bills. Both had brown backs, which indicated they were female or immature birds. We watched them until they moved into some shoreline vegetation to sleep. After turning our attention to the other birds for several minutes, we realized that the stilts had disappeared. Apparently the birds had dropped in to briefly rest and refuel, and then had continued on their way. Perhaps they realized that they were the largest and slowest potential targets for the Peregrine Falcon that was stalking the area that day. In any case, we could not relocate them, nor could Jay Gilliam and John Bissell who looked for them a short time afterward.

This record marks the second fall occurrence for Iowa. The first fall record was of two birds on 5 September 1994 at Storm Lake, Buena Vista County (Kent 1995a, b). Our birds were observed in the Marion County portion of the wildlife area. Warren, Polk, and Marion Counties all come together in Red Rock Wildlife Area and, judging by their arrival route, these stilts undoubtedly over flew Polk and Warren Counties in the minutes before we first heard them.

Black-necked Stilts are now regular in Iowa in the spring, and have been expanding north as a breeding species in the Midwest. It seems only a matter of time before stilts nest in Iowa and become more common as a fall migrant.

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Starr's Cave Park and Preserve: A Little Gem in Southeast Iowa

John Rutenbeck and Charles Fuller

Although many IOU members have spent time birding in southeastern Iowa, spots such as Lacey-Keosauqua State Park (Van Buren County), Shimek State Forest/Croton Unit (Lee County), and Cone Marsh (Louisa County) have often been the objects of their birding desire.

Starr's Cave Park and Preserve (Figure 1) is a lesser known, but very productive, birding hotspot in the southeastern corner of the state. Established in the mid-1970s, it is owned by the state and managed by the Des Moines County Conservation Board. The preserve is a 200-acre area just north of Burlington. Features include an extensive trail system through mature woodlands, prairie remnants, and the limestone bluffs along Flint Creek. Three caves are also located within the preserve. The limestone bluffs in which the caves are located are a favorite place among geologists. The rock is composed mainly of crinoid fossils, a sea animal from the Mississippian Period 300 million years ago. The bluffs are also the home of the internationally known Starr's Cave Rock Formation, a unique oolite limestone first discovered here.

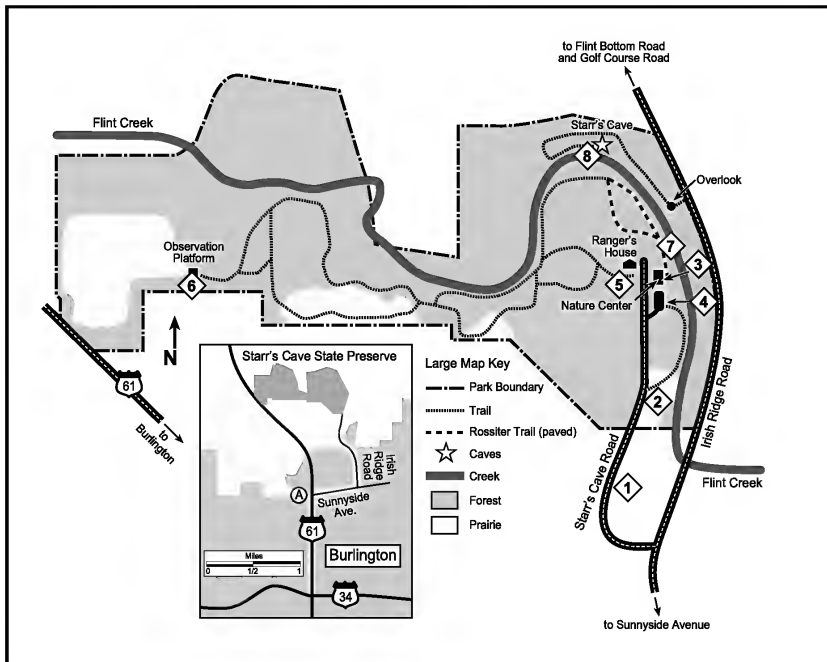


Figure 1. Starr's Cave State Preserve birding areas: (1) Starr's Cave Road, (2) small open meadow, (3) Nature Center building and parking lot, (4) prairie trail, (5) two trails through woods, (6) observation stand, (7) paved walkway along Flint Creek, (8) pedestrian bridge over Flint Creek.

The park has a nature center staffed by two naturalists. They offer diverse programming for schools, scouts, and other special interest groups. In the summer, youths can enroll in a variety of day camps. Starr's Cave staffers greet birders warmly and often stop to ask what is being seen.

Birders can reach Starr's Cave Park and Preserve by turning east onto Sunnyside Avenue from U.S. Highway 61 at the north edge of **Burlington** (Figure 1). Proceed on Sunnyside Avenue for one-half mile and turn north (left) onto Irish Ridge Road. Follow this road past several subdivisions and down the hill to the entrance road into the park.

The entrance road, **Starr's Cave Road** (Figures 1.1 and 2), while technically not a part of the park, is an excellent location for spotting migrating and nesting passerines. Most of the reports of birds seen at Starr's Cave are from this entrance road. Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos nest along the road; Blue-headed, Philadelphia, and occasional White-eyed Vireos are found here during migration. Warbler species seen along the entrance road include three common nesters: American Redstart, Northern Parula, and Common Yellowthroat. Migrating warblers that are usual visitors in the spring and fall include Blackburnian, Canada, Blackpoll, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Blue-winged, Golden-winged, Nashville, Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Ovenbird, Mourning, Wilson's, Black-and-white, and Connecticut. Warblers seen occasionally along the road include Yellow-breasted Chat, Cape May, Worm-eating, and Black-throated Blue. It is not uncommon to have warblers and vireos "dripping" from the trees along the entrance road in spring and fall if the weather conditions are right.

Flycatchers seen along the entrance road or in the park include migrating empids and Olive-sided Flycatcher, as well as nesting Eastern Wood Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, and Great Crested Flycatcher. Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Carolina Wren are regularly seen along the entrance road during nesting season as well. Pileated Woodpeckers, while not plentiful, can be found here at any time of the year. Wild Turkeys, which are plentiful, are seen regularly along the road.

Once inside the park, a good birding area is a **small open meadow** (Figure 1.2) along the right side of the road. This field, which is encircled by trees, features plants attractive to butterflies and is used by the naturalists as a wildflower study area. This is a good spot for Eastern Goldfinch, a number of sparrow species, Indigo Bunting, and wrens. A variety of raptors often perch in the trees at the back of this meadow, including all three accipiters and Red-tailed and Broad-winged Hawks.

Beyond the small meadow, trees reappear on both sides of the entrance road. This



Figure 2. The entrance road to Starr's Cave State Preserve is an excellent birding area during migration and nesting. Photograph by John Rutenbeck, Burlington, IA.

small treed meadow, which has lots of young saplings, can be excellent during migration for warblers and flycatchers. Both cuckoos have been seen in this area. A Western Tanager was found here several years ago and migrating Summer Tanagers have been seen in this area as well.

Another good birding spot is found at the end of the entrance road near the **Nature Center building and its parking lot** (Figure 1.3). The naturalists maintain a bird feeding station near the building; it can be good for a variety of woodland birds. Nesters here include Yellow-throated Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, Northern Parula, and an occasional Cerulean Warbler. Check the sycamore trees in the area carefully — the nesters love to sing from them. A picnic shelter just east of the Nature Center building provides an annual nesting site for Eastern Phoebe.

A main feature of Starr's Cave Park and Preserve is Flint Creek. It flows in an easterly direction through much of the park, and then turns south near the Nature Center on its way to the Mississippi River about a mile from the park's boundary. As a typical Iowa creek, it can be waded across during dry periods and can be a raging torrent following spring rains. A variety of birds can be found along the creek during the nesting season, including Wood Ducks, Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfishers, Barred and Great Horned Owls, and Louisiana Waterthrushes. Bald Eagles can occasionally be found along Flint Creek during the winter.

Located off of the Nature Center parking lot is a sign marking a **prairie trail** (Figure 1.4), which is a recent addition to the park. The trail follows Flint Creek through an area of second growth woodlands and low scrubby bushes and is an excellent place to find migrating warblers in the spring, including Mourning, Wilson's, Canada, and Connecticut.

From a signboard just west of the Nature Center, **two trails** (Figure 1.5) head uphill, taking interested hikers through mature woodlands. Along the way you may see a wide variety of woodland species. Wintering Northern Saw-Whet Owls have been found here in the cedar trees on several occasions. Following the trails west through the woodlands will bring you eventually to a prairie, which is at the westernmost reaches of the park. There is an **observation stand** (Figure 1.6) at this location. Interesting birds found here include a variety of sparrows, American Goldfinches, Northern Harriers, and Red-tailed Hawks.

North of the Nature Center is a woodland meadow featuring a **paved walkway** (Figure 1.7) along Flint Creek. Winter Wrens can be found here in early spring. In summer, this area is good for Carolina Wren, Scarlet Tanager, Yellow-throated Warbler, Northern Parula, and Louisiana Waterthrush. A wide variety of migrating warblers are found here in spring and fall. Rough-winged Swallows

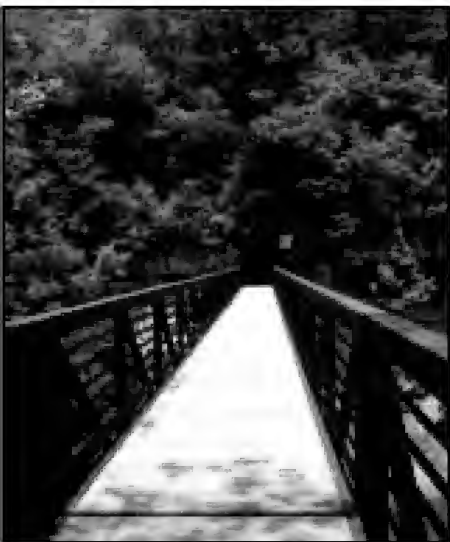


Figure 3. The new Draper pedestrian bridge across Flint Creek leads to Starr's Cave. Photograph by John Rutenbeck, Burlington, IA.

nest in the limestone bluffs across the creek and Broad-winged Hawks roost in the surrounding trees during migration. This is a beautiful area in spring, as it is filled with dozens of flowering redbud trees.

There are three caves in the park; a newly constructed **pedestrian bridge** (Figures 1.8 and 3) takes you high over the creek and to the entrance of Starr's Cave, the park's namesake. Follow the paved walkway north through the woodland meadow to get to this pedestrian bridge. The bridge is reached by following the sidewalk up the hill a short distance. From the bridge there are excellent views of Flint Creek both up- and downstream (Figure 4) and, at thirty feet above the creek, the bridge provides great viewing of surrounding trees.

Starr's Cave Park and Preserve is relatively small; the entire trail system can be easily hiked in about a half day. Birders stroll along the entrance road looking for moving flocks of passerines; one can easily walk the half-mile from one end of the road to the other end in about 30 minutes, allowing for time to search the treetops for passerines.

The Park and Preserve are open 6 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. daily. The Nature Center hours are Monday through Friday 9–3, Sunday 1–4, and by appointment.

What was once a family farm along Flint Creek is now an engaging birding destination. When visiting southeastern Iowa next time, plan to stop in Burlington to visit one of Iowa's little birding gems, Starr's Cave Park and Preserve.

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Figure 4. Looking downstream from the Draper Bridge at Flint Creek. Photograph by John Rutenbeck, Burlington, IA.

Book Review, *The Carolina Parakeet*

James J. Dinsmore

The Carolina Parakeet: Glimpses of a Vanished Bird by Noel F. R. Snyder, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2004, 153 pp., 2 color, 35 half-tone ill., \$29.95

The extinction of the Carolina Parakeet in the early 1900s is an ornithological mystery that has received little attention. With this book, Noel Snyder has provided us with a detailed summary of what is known about this species. The only wild parrot known to

have occurred in Iowa, the Carolina Parakeet disappeared from much of its range by the late 1800s and, according to most accounts, was last seen in the wild in 1904.

Snyder, by interviewing several Florida old timers in the 1970s and by digging through the notes of early collectors, has uncovered much new information including considerable evidence that the species survived at least until the late 1920s and perhaps into the late 1930s. He provides as thorough an account of its life history as we are likely ever to have and disputes the classic explanation that its demise was due to shooting, collection of young for the pet trade, or habitat loss. Snyder provides some fascinating evidence suggesting that disease might account for the loss of many of the last remaining populations. He also laments the lack of active conservation work for the species during its last days, largely because one prominent ornithologist thought that it already was extinct. The book doesn't mention Iowa, but does mention a pet Carolina Parakeet kept by former Iowan Paul Bartsch. It is a fascinating account of a sad story for bird conservation in North America.

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Fifty Years Ago in *Iowa Bird Life*

James J. Dinsmore

The September 1955 issue was a fairly thick one, thanks in part to eight black-and-white photographs by Fred Kent and his son, Tom. The lead article described a Big Day in May in the Iowa City region. Author Robert Vane and four others found a total of 125 species, an increase of five over their previous year's total. Among their better finds were a Swainson's Hawk and an American Avocet.

J. Harold Ennis, longtime birder from Mount Vernon, has a fine article on a nesting pair of Pileated Woodpeckers in Jones County. Besides some notes on their nesting behavior, there are several great photographs by Fred Kent of the woodpeckers at the nest hole.

Other articles cover birds of the Dubuque region, notes on a Northern Cardinal nest in Sioux City, and a birding trip to Minnesota and North Dakota. Among the notes is one by William Youngworth on nesting Blue Grosbeaks in northwestern Iowa. He points out that the species is a late migrant, and that it is common to see males singing along roadsides in August, well after most other birds are finished for the season.

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INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS: Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent in Word or WordPerfect to the editor. Research manuscripts will be sent for peer review. Submission of material should be by e-mail attachment or IBM-formatted 3.5" diskette; alternatively, by mail, typed or handwritten.

Photos and graphics: Submit photos and slides preferably as TIFF (*.tif) images or as high resolution JPEG (*.jpg) images in e-mail attachment or on CD.

Send all materials other than seasonal field reports to Kayleen A. Niyo at Kay@KayNiyo.com or by mail to 25100 Sunset Lane, Evergreen, CO 80439. Deadlines for submission are **January 1 for winter issue (Vol. 1), April 1 for spring issue (2), July 1 for summer issue (3), October 1 for fall issue (4)**. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION: Fall 2005: 23–25 September 2005, Lakeside Laboratory, Spirit Lake; Spring 2006: 19–21 May, Clear Lake/Ventura

FRONT COVER: King Rail that successfully nested and hatched 8 eggs at the Cumming wetlands, Warren, 19 May 2005 (see article on p. 146). Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

BACK COVER: Eastern Bluebird, eastern *Story*, 20 March 2005. Photograph by Carl Kurtz, St. Anthony, IA.

DESIGN: Lynn Ekblad, Ames, IA

GRAPHICS: Richard Beachler, Boone, IA



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